



**NORTHERN CORRIDOR
TRANSPORT
OBSERVATORY**

RELIABLE PERFORMANCE DATA

QUARTERLY REPORT

NORTHERN CORRIDOR TRANSPORT OBSERVATORY

JANUARY TO MARCH 2026



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1. Volume and Capacity

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of cargo volumes and capacity utilization at the Port of Mombasa and across the Northern Corridor. The assessment focuses on two primary indicators: Cargo Throughput through the Port of Mombasa and Volume per Country of Destination.

The Port of Mombasa handles both conventional cargo and containerized cargo. The container cargo operations comprises of two terminals with a combined annual handling capacity of 2.2 million TEUs. To meet growing cargo demand, the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) is developing Berth 19B, which will add 300,000 TEUs to port capacity, and Dongo Kundu Free Port Berth 1, designed to handle both containerized and conventional cargo. Planned investments also include the rehabilitation of Berths 1-5, 7-10, and 11-14, as well as the development of Berth 23. These infrastructure projects alongside Terminal Operating System upgrades, gate automation, and acquisition of new handling equipment, continue to enhance port capacity and efficiency.

1.1. Cargo Throughput through the Mombasa Port

Cargo throughput represents the total amount of cargo (comprising break-bulk, liquid bulk, dry bulk, containerized, transit, and transshipment cargo) discharged and loaded at the Port of Mombasa over a given period.

Total cargo throughput increased by 3.5% from 10.63 million tonnes in 2025 to 11.00 million tonnes in 2026, driven mainly by strong growth in non-containerized cargo, particularly dry bulk cargo which rose by 27.4%. Imports remained dominant, increasing by 14.3% and accounting for 84.6% of total throughput. However, containerized cargo and exports declined by 5.9% and 8.4% respectively. Transshipment cargo recorded significant growth of 62.8%. **Table 1** shows the cargo throughput for the quarter.



Table 1: Cargo throughput in metric tons (Jan-Mar 2025 and 2026)

Type of Cargo	2025	2026	Volume Change	Growth	% Share of Total Throughput 2025	% Share of Total Throughput 2026
Non-Container						
Dry Bulk	2,186,903	2,785,210	598,307	27.4%	20.6%	25.3%
Liquid Bulk	2,560,461	2,553,339	-7,122	-0.3%	24.1%	23.2%
Conventional	544,245	641,602	97,357	17.9%	5.1%	5.8%
Sub-Total	5,291,609	5,980,151	688,542	13.0%	49.8%	54.4%
Containerized	5,334,127	5,016,963	-317,164	-5.9%	50.2%	45.6%
TOTAL	10,625,736	10,997,114	371,378	3.5%		
IMPORT/EXPORT						
Imports	8,141,951	9,304,294	1,162,343	14.3%	76.6%	84.6%
Exports	1,287,097	1,178,944	-108,153	-8.4%	12.1%	10.7%
TOTAL	1,164,389	461,281	-703,108	-60.4%	11.0%	4.2%
Transshipment	32,299	52,595	20,296	62.8%	0.3%	0.5%
Restows	10,625,736	10,997,114	371,378	3.5%		

Source: KPA data Jan to March 2025 and 2026



1.2. Container Traffic at the Port of Mombasa

Container traffic through the Port of Mombasa declined by 3.9% from 499,026 TEUs in 2024 to 479,520 TEUs in 2025, largely due to a sharp 57.7% decline in transshipment traffic. Despite the overall decline, import and export container traffic increased by 12.9% and 6.3% respectively, supported by growing regional demand, improved port infrastructure, and enhanced digital systems. However, the data highlights significant trade imbalances, with empty containers accounting for 77.1% of export traffic and 37.6% of total import and export container movements as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Container traffic through the Port of Mombasa

		2024	2025	Volume Change	% Change
IMPORTS	Full	193,137	220,386	27,249	14.1%
	Empty	6,490	4,939	-1,551	-23.9%
	Total	199,627	225,325	25,698	12.9%
EXPORTS	Full	56,345	47,262	-9,083	-16.1%
	Empty	138,181	159,533	21,352	15.5%
	Total	194,526	206,795	12,269	6.3%
T/MENT	Full	73,148	28,082	-45,066	-61.6%
	Empty	29,379	15,280	-14,099	-48.0%
	Total	102,527	43,362	-59,165	-57.7%
RESTOWS	Full	2,124	3,384	1,260	59.3%
	Empty	222	654	432	194.6%
	Total	2,346	4,038	1,692	72.1%
TOTAL	Full	324,754	299,114	-25,640	-7.9%
	Empty	174,272	180,406	6,134	3.5%
	Total	499,026	479,520	-19,506	-3.9%

Source: KPA data Jan to March 2025 and 2026

1.3. Volume per Country of destination through the Port of Mombasa

Transit volume is the quantity of cargo that is discharged and destined to countries outside the port of loading or discharge.

Total transit cargo volumes through the Port of Mombasa increased by 16% from 3.55 million tonnes in Q1 2025 to 4.10 million tonnes in Q1 2026, mainly driven by a 19% increase in imports. Uganda remained the largest destination market, accounting for 2.91 million tonnes and recording 17% growth. DRC and Burundi registered the highest growth rates at 58% and 120% respectively, while Rwanda also recorded steady growth. In contrast, South Sudan experienced a significant 47% decline in cargo volumes, while exports remained generally low across most Member States. The detailed country breakdown is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Transit Volume through the port of Mombasa in tonnes

COUNTRY	Category	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	Volume Change	% Change
UGANDA	Imports	2,244,880	2,710,490	465,610	21%
	Exports	236,104	199,558	-36,546	-15%
	Total	2,480,983	2,910,048	429,065	17%
TANZANIA	Imports	84,846	106,136	21,290	25%
	Exports	14,005	17,453	3,448	25%
	Total	98,850	123,588	24,738	25%
BURUNDI	Imports	18,644	42,638	23,994	129%
	Exports	1,021	644	-377	-37%
	Total	19,665	43,283	23,618	120%
RWANDA	Imports	165,980	200,358	34,378	21%
	Exports	5,113	7,643	2,530	49%
	Total	171,092	208,001	36,909	22%
SOUTH SUDAN	Imports	365,621	203,664	-161,957	-44%
	Exports	23,808	3,399	-20,409	-86%
	Total	389,429	207,063	-182,366	-47%

COUNTRY	Category	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	Volume Change	% Change
D.R.C.	Imports	331,567	546,850	215,283	65%
	Exports	44,532	47,650	3,118	7%
	Total	376,099	594,501	218,402	58%
ETHIOPIA	Imports	9,537	12,725	3,188	33%
	Exports	2,807	1,845	-962	-34%
	Total	12,344	14,570	2,226	18%
OTHERS	Imports	1,886	1,329	-557	-30%
	Exports	85	0	-85	-100%
	Total	1,971	1,329	-642	-33%
TOTAL	Imports	3,222,960	3,824,492	601,532	19%
	Exports	327,474	278,191	-49,283	-15%
	TOTAL	3,550,434	4,102,682	552,248	16%

Source: KPA data Jan to March 2025 and 2026



2. Maritime Indicators

This section presents key maritime performance indicators reflecting the operational efficiency of the Port of Mombasa. The analysis focuses on vessel turnaround time and vessel waiting time before berth. The Port of Mombasa continues to implement measures to improve maritime performance, including Fixed Berthing Windows (FBWs) to guarantee vessel scheduling certainty, alongside infrastructure expansions at Berths 19B, 23, and 24, gate automation, modern equipment acquisitions, and the rollout of the Maritime Single Window System (MSWS) for streamlined information flow.

2.1. Vessel Waiting Time before berth (hours)

Vessel waiting time before berth is calculated from the time a vessel arrives at the fairway buoy to the time it reaches its first berth, including any waiting at the vessel's own convenience.

The Port of Mombasa recorded substantial improvement in vessel waiting time before berth in Q1 2026, averaging approximately 14 hours compared to 33 hours in Q1 2025. The improvement is attributed to enhanced berth scheduling under the Fixed Berthing Window system, reduced vessel

congestion, better yard management, and stabilization of cargo flows. This reflects gradual recovery from the severe congestion experienced during the second half of 2025. **Figure 1** illustrates vessel waiting time trends from 2022 to 2026.

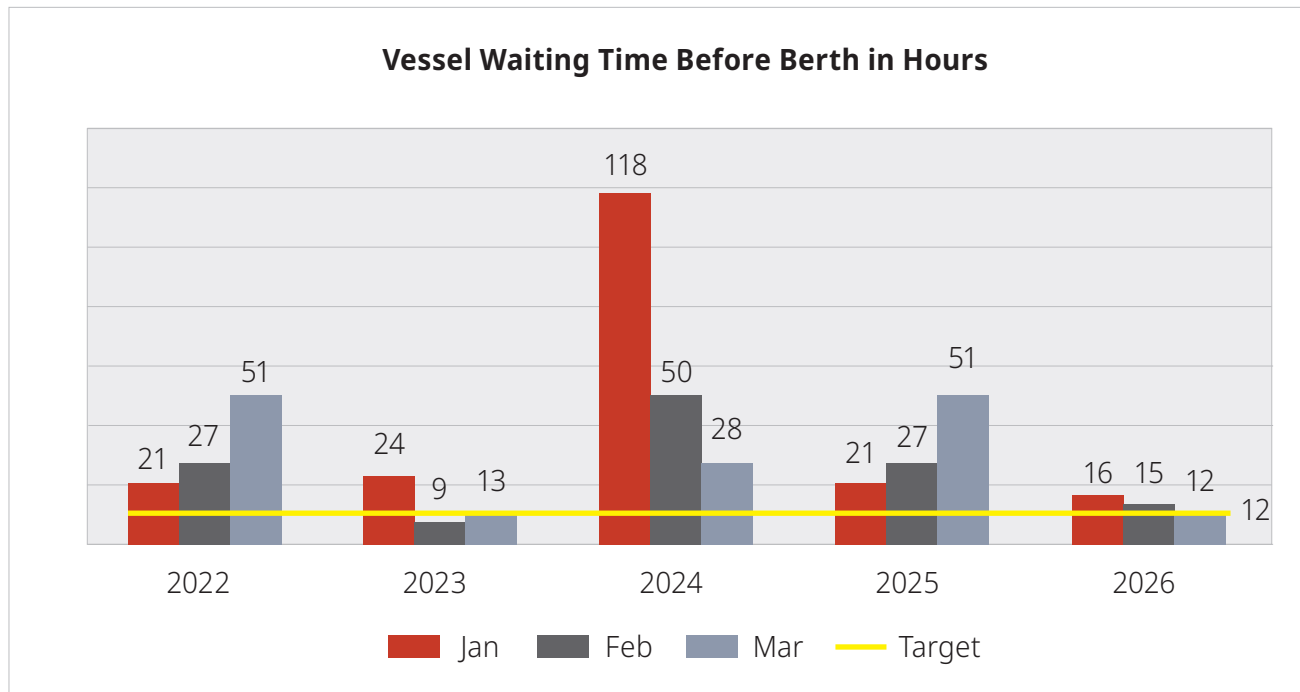


Figure 1: Average Vessel Waiting Time before Berth in hours at the Port of Mombasa

Source: KPA data Jan to March 2022 to 2026

2.2. Vessel Turnaround Time at the port of Mombasa

The Vessel Turnaround Time measures the duration from when a vessel enters the port area at the fairway buoy to the time it departs.

Vessel turnaround time improved significantly in Q1 2026, averaging approximately 53 hours compared to about 226 hours recorded during the same period in 2025. This was below the target of 72 hours, reflecting improved operational efficiency at the port. Similar to vessel waiting time, the improvement was driven by reduced congestion, improved berth scheduling, and operational stabilization following severe congestion experienced in late 2025. **Figure 2** shows vessel turnaround time trends from the quarters of 2022 to 2026.

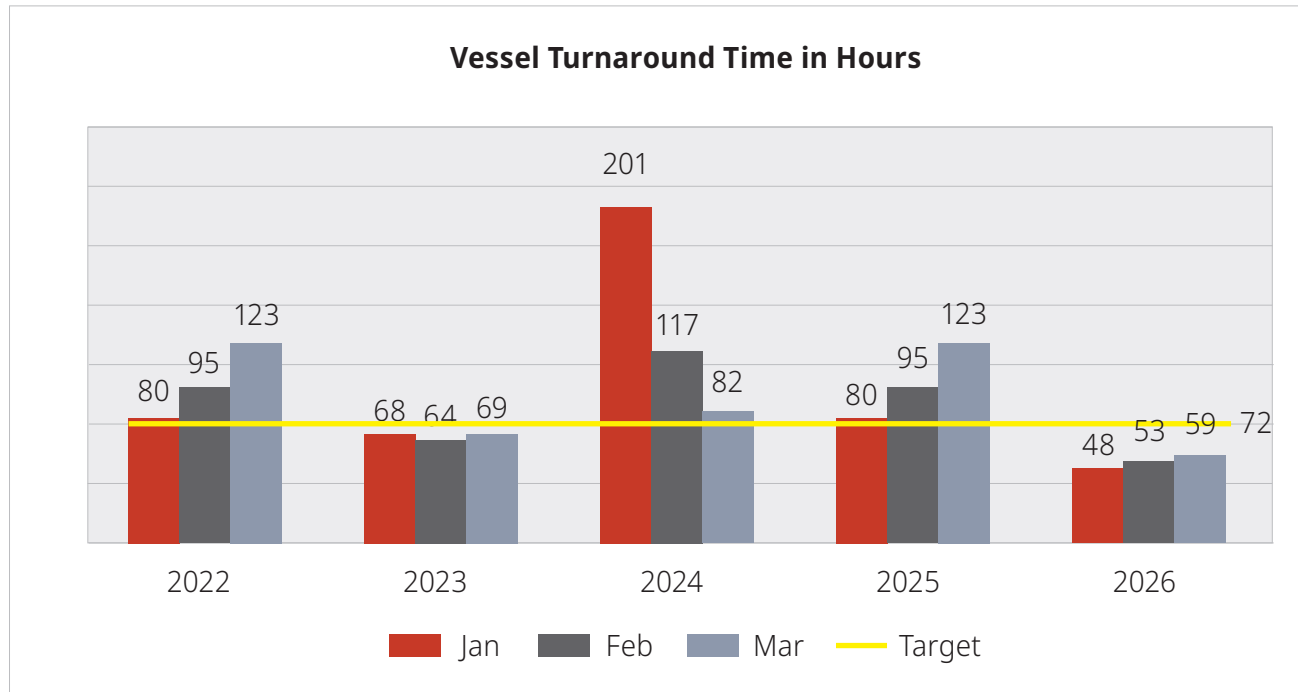


Figure 2: Ship turnaround time at the port of Mombasa in hours.

Source: KPA data Jan to March 2022 to 2026



3. Port Indicators

This section assesses the operational performance of the Port of Mombasa for Q1 2026, focusing on key efficiency indicators related to cargo handling and associated delays. The Port of Mombasa operates two container terminals: Terminal 1 (Berths 16, 17, 18) and Terminal 2 (Berths 20, 21 and 22), with a combined annual container handling capacity of 2.2 million TEUs, complemented by conventional cargo berths, bulk facilities, and oil jetties.

3.1. Containerized Import Cargo Dwell time at the port of Mombasa

Containerized cargo dwell time measures the duration from when a container is offloaded until it exits the port. Dwell time is assessed by calendar month of arrival using the date of entry inward, excluding consignments delayed beyond 21 days for compliance or legal reasons. Cargo is assessed under two categories: Green Channel (facilitated, no customs examination) and Red Channel (non-facilitated, subject to inspection).

Containerized import cargo dwell time improved steadily, declining from 98 hours in Q1 2025 to 69 hours in Q1 2026. The improvement reflects better cargo evacuation, enhanced coordination between KPA and KRA, improved yard management, and reduced congestion at the port. The declining trend indicates increasing efficiency in cargo clearance and movement processes at the Port of Mombasa..

Figure 3 shows the trend in containerised import cargo dwell time from 2022 to 2026

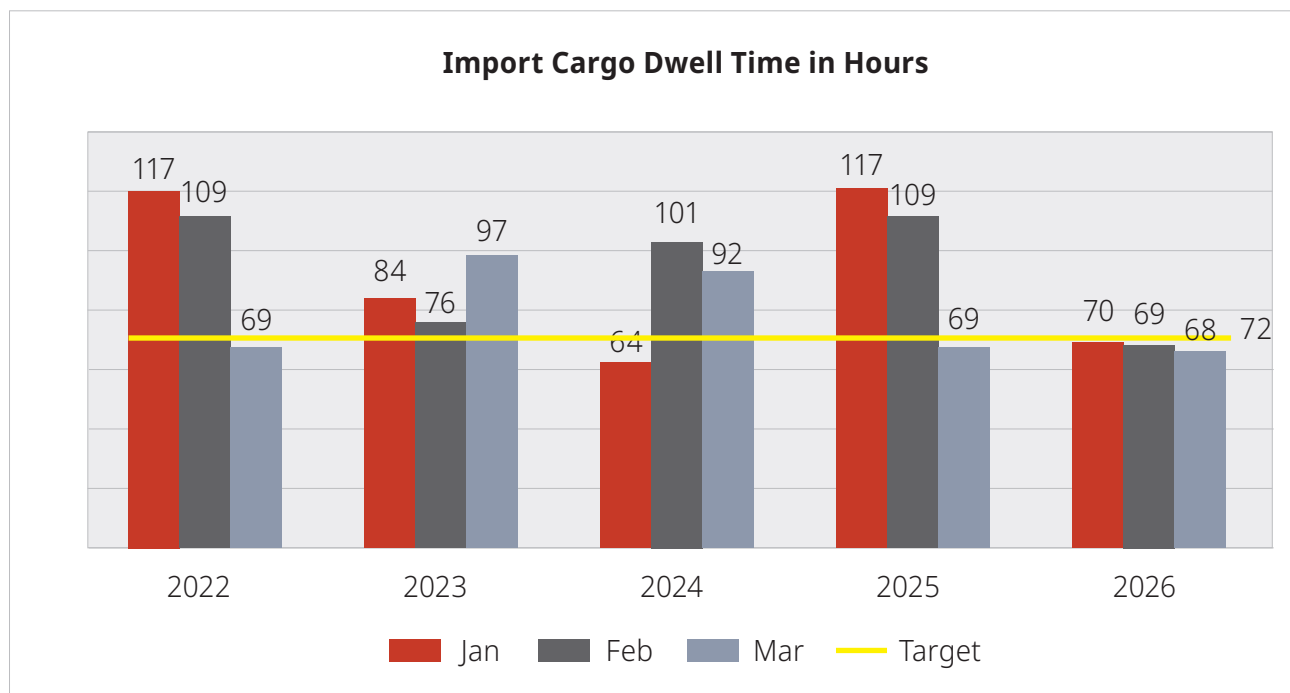


Figure 3: Average containerized import cargo dwell time

Source: KPA data Jan to March 2022 to 2026

3.2. Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) Customs Time and Delays

Custom release time measures the time taken to process and approve cargo declarations and other required interventions, from acceptance to customs release. After Release Time measures the duration it takes to remove cargo from the port after customs release.

RRA recorded improvements in customs performance indicators under the Single Customs Territory framework in Q1 2026 compared to Q1 2025. Delay processing time improved from 44 to 29 hours while after-release time declined from 20 to 12 hours reflecting enhanced customs efficiency and improved inter-agency coordination. However, customs release time increased marginally from 29 to

32 hours. The improvements are attributed to greater use of electronic payment systems, improved data sharing with KRA, and streamlined customs procedures. **Figure 4** shows the RRA SCT release time in hours for the quarter.

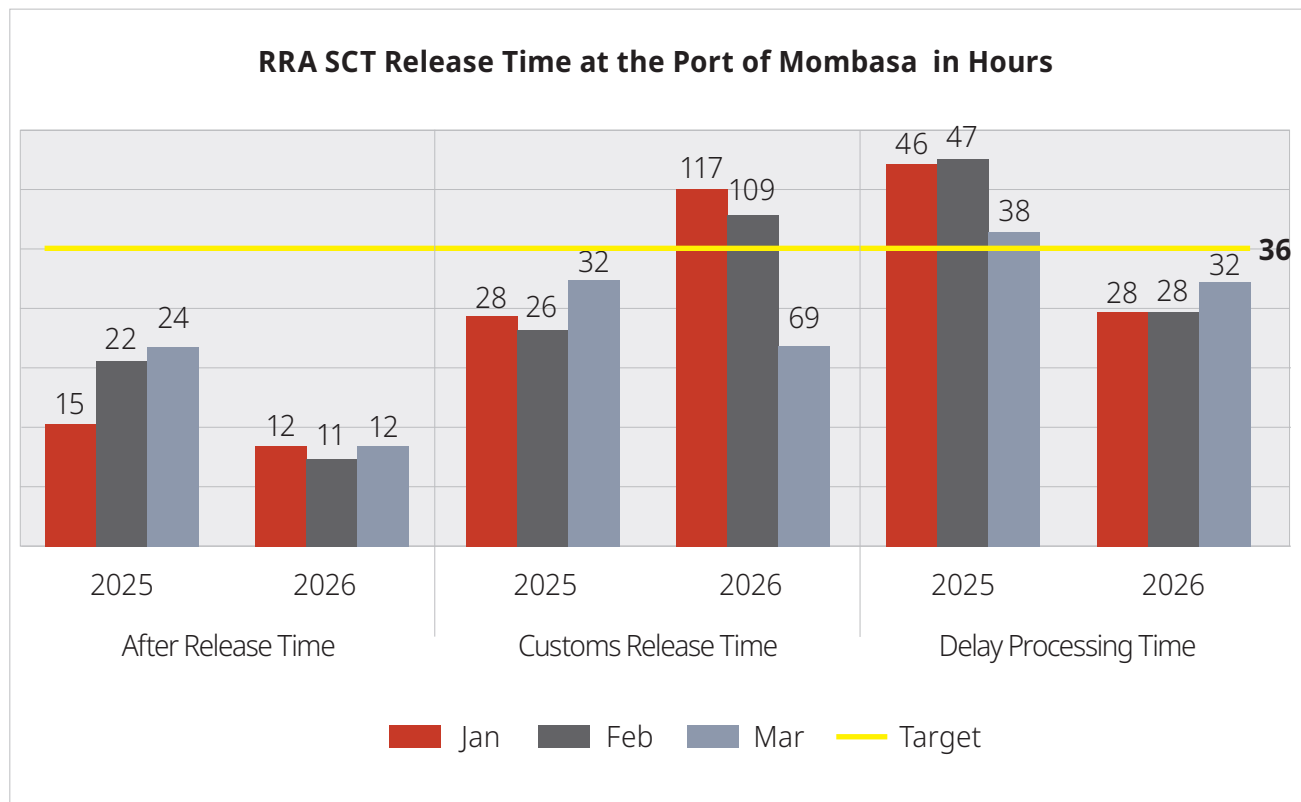


Figure 4: RRA After Release, Customs Release, and Delay Processing Times

Source: RRA data Jan to March 2025 and 2026

3.3. Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) Customs Time and Delays

Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) customs performance indicators at the Port of Mombasa include Customs Release Time (average time from customs entry registration to issuance of the release order) and After Release Time (average time from release order issuance to physical exit of goods from the port). Customs release time is mainly influenced by the completeness of documentation, validation

procedures, and payment processes. After-release time is affected by congestion at the port, importer readiness, and the effectiveness of truck appointment and access systems.

KRA recorded significant efficiency gains in Q1 2026 compared to Q1 2025, with customs release time reducing from 118 to 26 hours and after-release time improving from 146 to 70 hours. Nevertheless, after-release time remained above the 36-hour target. The improvements indicate faster cargo clearance and evacuation processes at the Port of Mombasa. **Figure 5** shows the KRA SCT release time in hours for the quarter.

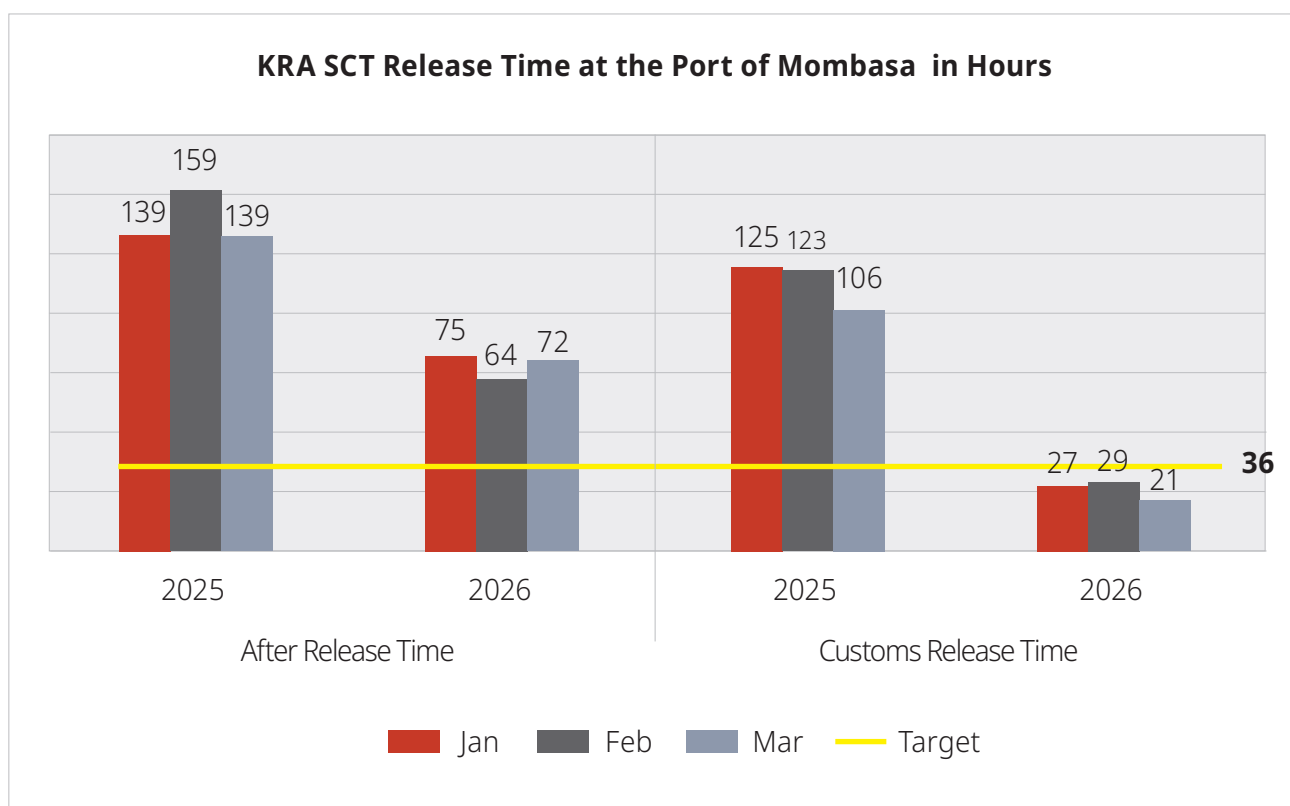


Figure 5: KRA After Release and Customs Release times

Source: KRA data Jan to March 2025 and 2026



4. Corridor Indicators

This section evaluates the performance of the Northern Corridor by assessing cargo movement from the Port of Mombasa and Inland Container Depots (ICDs) to border points and final destinations. The analysis covers key corridor indicators including transit time using RECTS data, and weighbridge traffic and compliance indicators. Transit time is measured from seal arming at origin to disarmament at destination. The Northern Corridor transit target is 60 hours per 1,000 km under ideal conditions, assuming an average travel speed of 40 km/h, with drivers taking 2-hour rest breaks every 4 hours of driving and an 8-hour rest after two shifts.

4.1. Transit Time in Kenya

Transit performance along the key Northern Corridor routes in Kenya improved significantly in Q1 2026 compared to Q1 2025. The Mombasa–Malaba route improved by 33%, reducing average transit time from 102 hours to 68 hours, while the Mombasa–Busia route improved by 26% from 90 hours to 67 hours. On the Malaba route and , transit time was still 13 hours above the target of 55 hours and 10 hours above the target of 57 hours on the Busia route as presented in **Table 4**

Table 4: Transit time from Mombasa to Malaba and Busia in hours

	Mombasa to Malaba		Mombasa to Busia		Mombasa to Taveta
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2026
Jan	99	67	81	60	16
Feb	104	70	90	67	25
Mar	102	68	99	73	23
Average	102	68	90	67	21
Distance	921	921	949	949	265
Target Transit Time (60hrs/1000km)	55	55	57	57	16
Variance	47	13	33	10	5

Source: RECTS data Jan to March 2025 and 2026

Table 2 details transit times from Mombasa and ICD Nairobi to various inland destinations for Q1 2026. [J11.1] Across the corridor, several long-distance regional routes continued to record significant delays above the targets. Most routes to DRC and western Uganda experienced longer transit times relative to distance. Mombasa–Hoima remained the most delayed route, averaging 142 hours against a target of 82 hours, resulting in a negative variance of 61 hours. Other heavily delayed routes included Mombasa–Goli (39 hours), Mombasa–Vurra (35 hours), Mombasa–Mbarara (34 hours) and Mombasa–Jinja (30 hours). In contrast, routes to Rwanda experienced relatively shorter delays, with Mombasa–Rusizi recording the closest performance to target at a variance of only 2 hours, followed by Mombasa–Kigali at 9 hours. .

Table 5: Transit time in Kenya (Hours)

Origin	Destination	Jan	Feb	Mar	Average	Distance	Target Transit Time (60hrs/1000km)	Variance
Mombasa	Elegu	94	106	110	103	1430	86	17
Mombasa	Padea	121	124	101	115	1487	90	25
Mombasa	Mpondwe	126	126	124	125	1596	96	29
Mombasa	Hoima	148	132	147	142	1363	82	60
Mombasa	Jinja	106	93	97	99	1136	69	30
Mombasa	Kampala	96	92	91	93	1140	69	24
Mombasa	Goli	140	120	122	127	1465	88	39
Mombasa	Taveta	16	25	23	21	265	16	5
Mombasa	Katuna	121	118	109	116	1570	95	21
Mombasa	Mbarara	136	93	121	117	1381	83	34
Mombasa	Vurra	138	122	119	126	1504	91	35
Mombasa	Kigali	98	111	114	108	1642	99	9
Mombasa	Rubavu	105	116	119	113	1706	103	10
Mombasa	Rusizi	119	123	98	113	1856	112	1
ICD Nairobi	Elegu	71	70	79	73	939	57	16
ICD Nairobi	Katuna	99	85	86	90	1096	66	24

Source: RECTS data Jan to March 2025 and 2026

4.2. Transit time in Rwanda

Transit time in Rwanda is defined as the duration from the electronic authorization of a truck's journey in the RRA system to the cancellation of the transit bond at the exit border.

Relative to distance, transit time performance within Rwanda was generally above the Northern Corridor targets delays ranging from 8 hours on the Kagitumba–Rusizi route to a high of 49 hours on the Gatuna–Rubavu route. The detailed breakdown by route is presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Average Transit time in Rwanda (Hours)

Origin	Destination	Jan	Feb	Mar	Average	Distance	Target Transit Time (60hrs/1000km)	Variance
Cyanika	Rubavu	30	27	30	29	80	5	24
Kagitumba	Rusumo	31	19	21	24	207	13	11
Kagitumba	Rusizi	39	37	38	38	465	28	10
Gatuna	Kigali	48	42	36	42	80	5	37
Gatuna	Rusizi	45	40	37	41	422	26	15
Gatuna	Rubavu	50	71	54	58	157	10	48
Gatuna	Bugarama	70	65	70	68	345	21	47
Mombasa	Kigali	120	125	126	124	1642	99	25
Mombasa	Rubavu	123	132	132	129	1706	103	26
Mombasa	Rusizi	115	135	131	127	1856	112	15

Source: RRA data Jan to March 2026

4.3. Transit Time in Uganda

Transit time in Uganda measures cargo movement duration within Uganda to key border posts and other notable locations, according to the Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System (RECTS data). Transit performance in Uganda during Q1 2026 showed significant variations across routes. Kampala–Rubavu recorded the best performance, averaging 32 hours against a target of 35 hours, exceeding the benchmark by 3 hours. In contrast, Kampala–Kigali had the longest delays averaging 83 hours against a target of 31 hours, resulting in a 52-hour delay. Other routes with long delays included Busia–Cyanika and Kampala–Mpondwe, with delays of 37 hours and 24 hours respectively, as presented in **Table 7**

Table 7: Average transit Time in Uganda (Hours)

Origin	Destination	Jan	Feb	Mar	Average	Distance	Target Transit Time (60hrs/1000km)	Variance
Kampala	Elegu	27	31	77	45	436	27	18
Kampala	Goli	47	29	32	36	389	24	12
Kampala	Mpondwe	41	42	71	51	436	27	24
Kampala	Kigali	79	88	83	83	508	31	52
Kampala	Rubavu	29	33	34	32	573	35	-3
Kampala	Vurra	53	36	34	41	428	26	15
Malaba	Kampala	27	22	20	23	217	13	10
Busia	Mpondwe	44	71	70	62	626	38	24
Busia	Cyanika	96	67	71	78	683	41	37
Elegu	Malaba	43	49	46	46	515	31	15
Katuna	Malaba	59	53	58	57	645	39	18
Katuna	Mombasa	118	109	103	110	1574	95	15
Katuna	Mpondwe	25	17	36	26	260	16	10
Goli	Kampala	34	50	58	47	389	24	23

Source: RECTS data Jan to March 2026



4.4. Weighbridge Performance

Weighbridge performance indicator assesses the average number of trucks weighed per day at the various weighbridges. Weighbridge performance is evaluated using three key indicators: weighbridge crossing time, average daily traffic, and compliance with prescribed vehicle weight limits.

4.4.1. Average Weighbridge Daily Traffic

The average daily traffic represents the mean number of vehicles weighed at each weighbridge over a 24-hour period.

Weighbridge traffic along the Northern Corridor increased significantly in Q1 2026, reflecting growing freight movement and increased corridor utilization. Athi River recorded the highest average daily traffic at 3,856 trucks per day, up from 2,911 in Q1 2025, while Mariakani remained consistently high at 3,517 trucks per day compared to 3,103 in the corresponding quarter in 2025. Webuye

registered the most substantial growth, with traffic increasing by 133% from 1,073 to 2,494 trucks per day, indicating increased transit cargo flows. Gilgil remained relatively stable, averaging 1,041 trucks daily compared to 959 in Q1 2025 as illustrated in **Table 8**.

Table 8: Weighbridge traffic through selected Kenyan weighbridges

Weighbridge	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar
Mariakani	2026	3695	3470	3387
	2025	2580	3665	2487
Athi River	2026	4129	3868	3572
	2025	1045	956	876
Gilgil	2026	985	1246	891
	2025	940	1492	786
Webuye	2026	2894	1894	2695

Source: KeNHA data January to March 2025 – 2026

4.4.2. Weighbridge Compliance

Weighbridge compliance indicator measures the percentage of trucks that comply with the gross vehicle weight and axle load limits, as stipulated in the East Africa Community Vehicle Load Control Act 2016 relative to the total number of trucks weighed.

Overloading remains a significant driver of premature road deterioration along the Corridor, and weighbridges play a critical enforcement role through penalties for bypassing stations and violations of maximum axle load configurations.

Weighbridge compliance levels along the Northern Corridor in Kenya remained consistently high during the quarter under review, averaging above 96% across all reported weighbridges. Mariakani and Athi River recorded the highest compliance levels at an average of 98.0%, while Webuye improved from 96.1% in Q1 2025 to 96.6% in Q1 2026 despite significantly higher traffic volumes. Gilgil recorded a slight decline from 97.1% to 96.2%, in Q1 2025 and Q1 2026, respectively, though remaining within acceptable compliance levels as recorded in **Table 9**.

Table 9: Weighbridge compliance at the Kenyan weighbridges (Percentage)

Weighbridge	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar
Mariakani	2025	98.5	98.7	97.3
	2026	97.7	97.4	99
Athi River	2025	96.5	97.2	95.5
	2026	98.3	97.8	98
Gilgil	2025	97.4	95.3	98.5
	2026	95.4	96.4	96.9
Webuye	2025	94.7	97.3	96.4
	2026	98.3	94.6	97

Source: KeNHA data January to March 2025 to 2026.



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