2024

SOUTH AFRICAN ENERGY TRADE REPORT

electricity & energy

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2024 SOUTH AFRICAN ENERGY TRADE REPORT

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Whereas the greatest care has been taken in the compilation of this publication, the Department of Electricity and Energy relies on data provided by various sources and DEE not hold itself responsible for any errors or omissions emanating as a consequence of provision of inaccurate, incorrect or incomplete data from such sources.

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2024 South African Energy Trade Report. This report is based on imports and exports energy data collated mainly from the South African Revenue Service (SARS). This report presents us with the opportunity to inform and update all the relevant stakeholders about energy trade between South Africa and other countries.

This report is published annually with data and analysis based on the SARS Trade Statistics. We have made remarkable progress in improving the overall quality of our energy data in order to ensure that accurate, timely and reliable data is provided in all our publications and hope that this report will become a source of reference among energy analysts in South Africa and abroad. We will continuously collaborate with all our data providers to ensure that our energy data is of highest quality possible.

I extend my most sincere thanks and appreciation to the Energy Economics and Statistics Directorate for the hard work that went into the compilation of this publication. I would also like to record my appreciation to all the energy data providers who have helped us to accomplish the compilation of this report. Comments and inputs are welcome and should be addressed to Ramaano.Nembahe@dee.gov.za.

Mr. Subesh Pillay
Acting Director-General
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	**3**
TABLE OF FIGURES	**5**
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	**6**
1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	**8**
1.1 Overview	**9**
2. ENERGY TRADE DATA ANALYSIS	**11**
2.1 Crude oil and petroleum products	11
2.1.1 Imports and exports	11
2.1.2 Petroleum products trade shares	14
2.1.3 Crude oil and petroleum products imports per country of origin	16
2.1.4 Petroleum products exports per destination country	20
2.2 Natural gas	**24**
2.3 Coal	**27**
2.3.1 Coal imports and exports	27
2.3.2 Coal trade between South Africa and other countries	29
2.4 Electricity	**32**
3. CONCLUSION	**36**
4. REFERENCES	**37**

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Crude oil imports 11
Figure 2: Petroleum products imports 12
Figure 3: Petroleum products exports 13
Figure 4: Petroleum products imports % share 14
Figure 5: Petroleum Products exports % share 15
Figure 6: Crude oil imports per country of origin 16
Figure 7: Diesel and petrol imports per country of origin 17
Figure 8: Jet fuel imports per country of origin 18
Figure 9: LPG imports per country of origin 19
Figure 10: Petrol and diesel exports per destination country 20
Figure 11: Jet fuel and IP exports per destination country 21
Figure 12: LPG exports per destination country 22
Figure 13: Natural gas imports 24
Figure 14: Natural gas exports 25
Figure 15: Coal imports 27
Figure 16: Coal exports 28
Figure 17: Coal imports by country of origin 29
Figure 18: Coal exports per destination country 30
Figure 19: Electricity imports 32
Figure 20: Electricity exports 33
Figure 21: Electricity exports per destination country 34

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCM	Billion Cubic Meters
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAF	Energy Availability Factor
GTL	Gas to Liquid
GWH	Gigawatt Hours
IP	Illuminating Paraffin
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
MW	Megawatts
PetroSA	Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation of South Africa
SAPP	Southern African Power Pool
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USA	United States of America

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Coal, oil, and natural gas are the primary sources of energy products in South Africa. The country has abundant coal reserves, limited oil reserves, and insignificant resources of natural gas. Given the growing need for energy in the country, South Africa is a significant player in the world's energy trading.

Most of the South Africa's oil consumption is fulfilled through international imports, highlighting a significant dependence on foreign sources for this critical energy resource. These imported crude oil supplies are then refined and processed within South Africa to yield a diverse range of petroleum-based products that underpin transportation, industry, agriculture, and everyday life. However, South Africa's petroleum products demand currently exceeds the country's production. Consequently, imports are used to meet the surplus demand. Liquid petroleum gas (LPG), natural gas, jet fuel, diesel, gasoline, and illuminating paraffin (IP) are the petroleum products that are imported into the country.

Bituminous or steam coal is the main export of coal with anthracite having to be imported due to declining reserves. South Africa uses a large amount of its coal production to generate electricity. The electricity is traded with the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) member countries namely Mozambique, Botswana, Malawi, Angola, Lesotho, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

South Africa has offshore shallow gas fields supplying the Gas-to-Liquids (GTL) facility of Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation of South Africa (PetroSA), which however, been in strong decline over the past number of years. The most important source of gas to South Africa comes from the development of the Pande and Temane natural gas fields in Mozambique and the building of the ROMPCO pipeline to move the gas from Pande and Temane to Secunda.

An overview of 2024 imports and exports of coal, natural gas, electricity, petroleum products, and crude oil will be provided by the data and analysis presented in this section below.

1.1 Overview

Significant changes in supply and demand occurred in the global energy market in 2024, which increased the demand for a range of energy products, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and renewable energy. The demand for electricity increased about twice as quickly as the overall energy demand, driven by factors such as increased cooling needs, increased industrial use, transportation electrification, the expansion of data centres, and artificial intelligence.

In 2024, the average annual rise of 1.3 percent for the previous decade was surpassed by a 2.2 percent increase in global energy demand. More than 80 percent of the rise in the world's energy demand was due to emerging and developing economies. Despite slowing development, China's energy consumption increased by less than 3 percent, which was half of its 2023 rate and significantly lower than the nation's current annual average. Following years of decreases, advanced economies began to expand again, with their total energy demand rising by nearly 1percent.

As much as the electricity consumption increased by almost 1,100 terawatt-hours, or 4.3 percent, natural gas experienced the largest growth in demand among fossil fuels in 2024 due to increased electricity usage. The demand for gas increased by 2.7 percent, or 115 billion cubic meters (bcm), as opposed to the previous ten-year average of about 75 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year. In contrast, oil demand saw a slower growth rate, rising by 0.8 percent in 2024. This low growth rate signals a likely slowdown in economic activity, increased efficiency in oil usage, a transition to alternate energy sources, or a combination of these factors influencing overall oil consumption this year. As for coal, the world's demand for coal increased by 1 percent, which was half as the year before. More than 90 percent of the annual rise in coal use worldwide was caused by intense heatwaves in China and India, which increased cooling demands. This shows the significant impact that extreme weather may have on patterns of energy demand (IEA,2025).

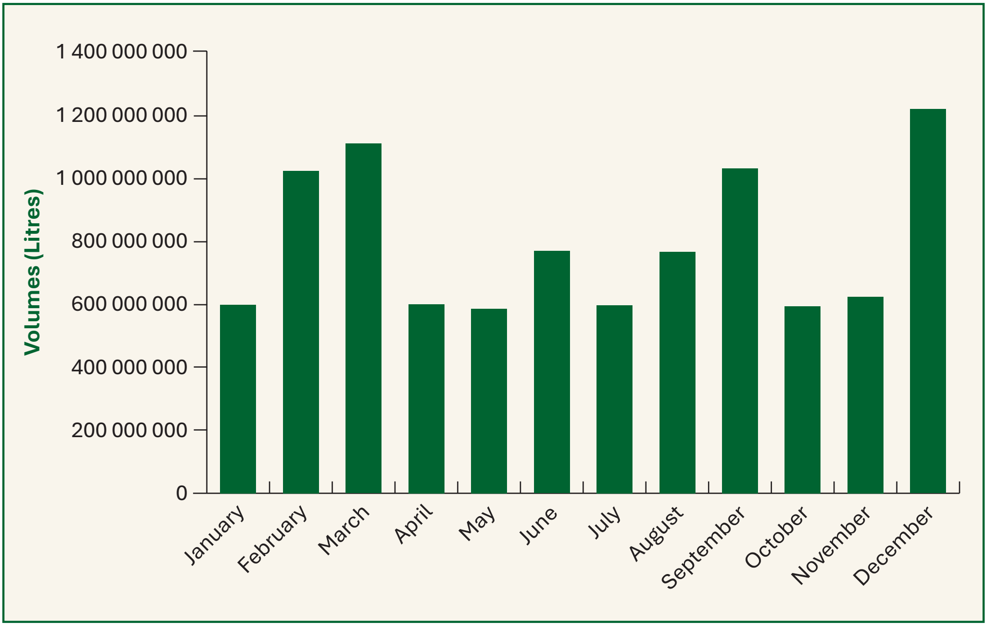
2. ENERGY TRADE DATA ANALYSIS

2.1 Crude oil and petroleum products

2.1.1 Imports and exports

Nigeria and Saudi Arabia were the main suppliers of crude oil in 2024, from which South Africa imports in large quantities to meet its domestic energy demands. Crude oil imports into South Africa increased by 13 percent in 2024, from 8.4 billion litres in 2023 to 9.5 billion litres. In December 2024, the country imported 1.2 billion litres of crude oil, which was the highest, from 598 million litres in January of the same year as shown in Figure 1 below. In 2024, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia supplied 4.5 billion and 1.7 billion litres of crude oil, respectively.

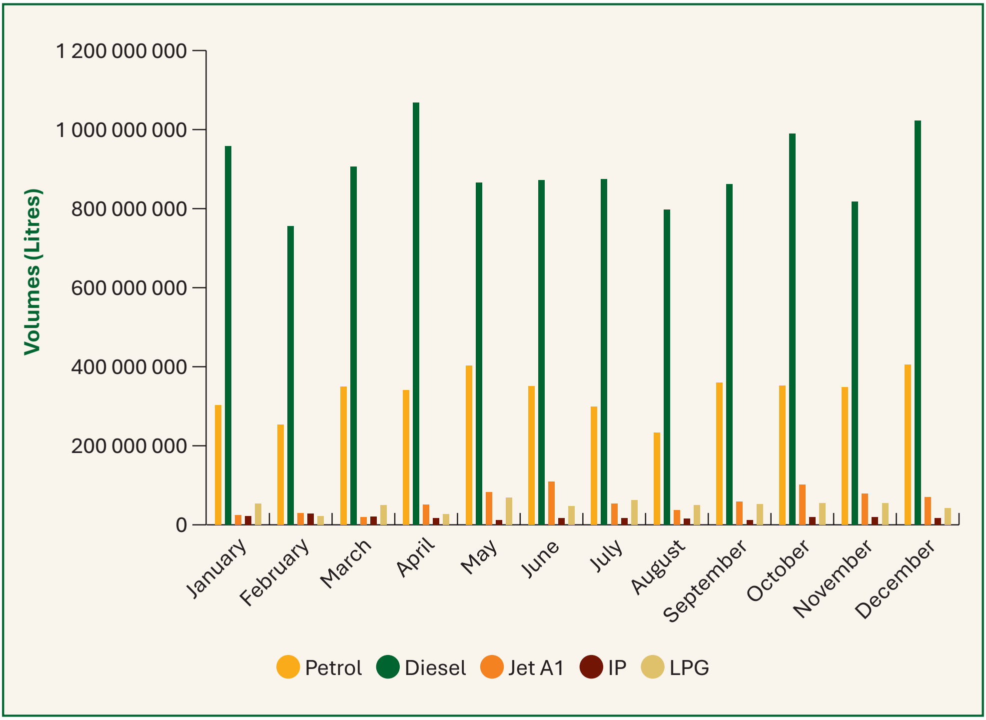
Figure 1: Crude oil imports



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

In terms of petroleum products, diesel remained the most imported fuel in 2024, with petrol and jet fuel coming in second and third, respectively. In 2024, South Africa imported 10.8 billion litres (66 percent) of diesel down from 12.8 billion litres (67 percent) imported in 2023. Petrol showed a slight decline recording 4 billion litres (25 percent) from 4.5 billion litres (23 percent). Meanwhile, the country imported 589 million litres (4 percent) of LPG and 718 million litres (4 percent) of jet fuel in 2024 compared to 871 million litres (5 percent) in 2023 and 674 million litres respectively (4 percent) in 2023 (Figure 2).

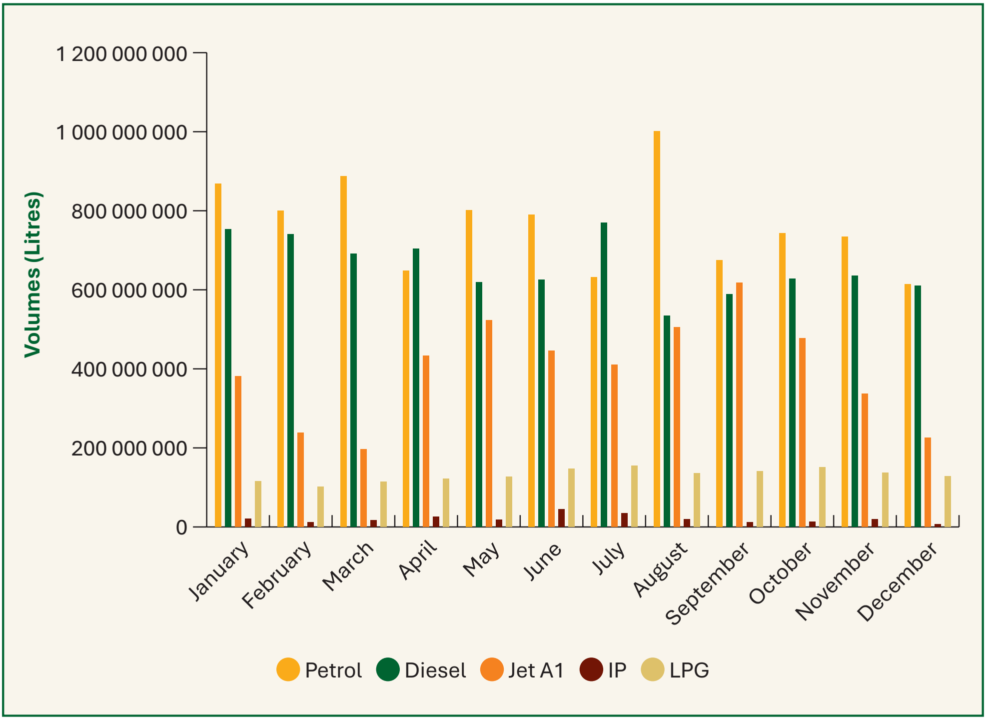
Figure 2: Petroleum products imports



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

With a total of 920 million litres (39 percent) in 2024, compared to 1 billion litres (38 percent) in 2023, gasoline was again the most exported petroleum product. Diesel came in second with 790 million litres (33 percent) in 2024, from 935 million litres (35 percent) in 2023. Jet A1 exports increased to 479 million (20 percent) in 2024, from 452 million litres (17 percent) in 2023 and a total of 158 million litres (7 percent) of LPG were exported in 2024, compared to 252 million litres (9 percent) in 2023. Lastly, a total of 25 million litres (1 percent) of IP was exported in 2024, down from 29 million litres (3 percent in 2023. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Petroleum products exports

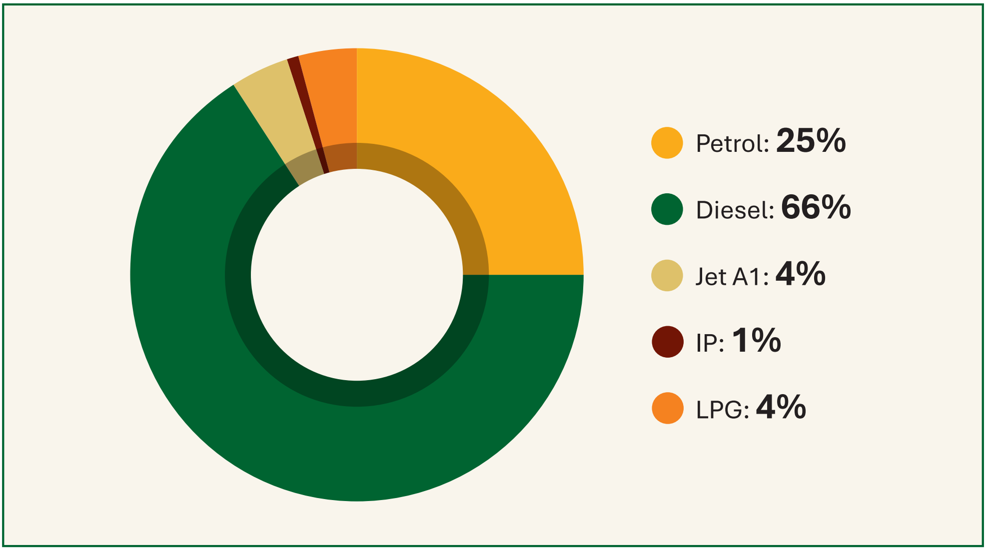


Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

2.1.2 Petroleum products trade shares

Of the refined fuel imported into South Africa in 2024, diesel accounted for 66 percent (10.8 billion litres), slight lesser from 67 percent (12.8 billion litres) in 2023. The minor decline in diesel's percentage of refined fuel imports could be attributed to increased local refining capacity or lower demand in industries such as transportation and mining. Meanwhile, the higher share of petrol may reflect a shift in customer demand for gasoline-powered vehicles or a resurgence in private transportation use following the economic recovery. Petrol came in second with 25 percent (4 billion litres), up from 23 percent (4.5 billion litres). Jet fuel and LPG imports both recorded 4 percent trade shares in 2024, (718 million litres) and (589 million litres), from 4 percent (674 million litres) and 5 percent (871 million litres) respectively in 2023, respectively. On the other hand, IP trade share remained at 1 percent in 2024 (219 million litres) from 289 million litres in 2023 (Figure 4).

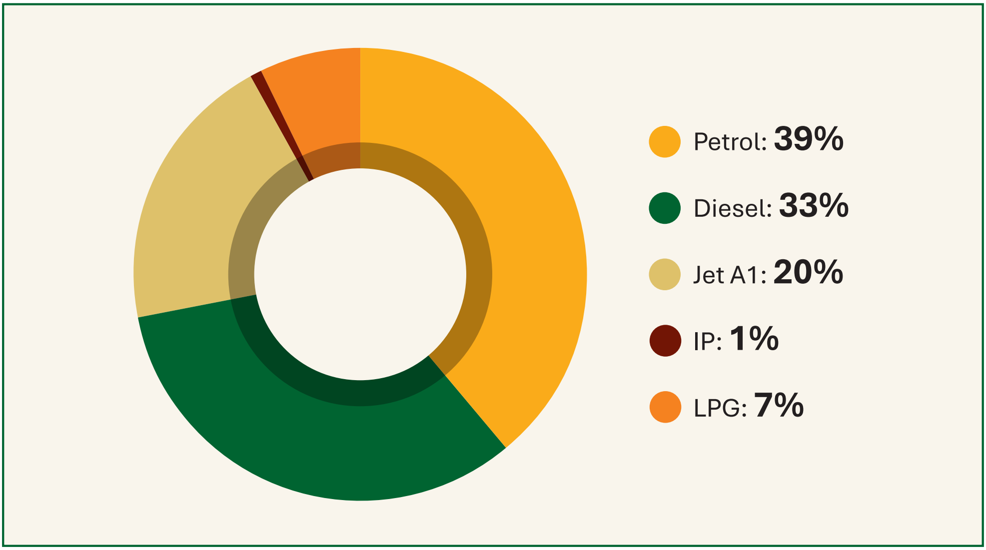
Figure 4: Petroleum products imports percentage share



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

In 2024, 39 percent (920 million litres) of refined fuel exports were made up of petrol, from 38 percent (1.0 billion litres) in 2023. Neighboring countries or significant export markets may have seen an increase in demand for gasoline as a result of economic expansion, greater car ownership, or changes in their refining capacity. Diesel followed with 33 percent (790 million litres) down from 35 percent (935 million litres) in 2023, and jet fuel came in third with 20 percent (479 million litres) up from 17 percent (452 million litres) in 2023. South Africa's own economic activity in diesel-reliant sectors (such as mining, agriculture, and transportation) may have expanded, resulting in less availability for export. LPG accounted for 7 percent (158 million litres) of South Africa's exports in 2024, up from 9 percent (252 million litres) in 2023 and illuminating paraffin accounted for 1 percent of the total petroleum products exported in 2024 (Figure 5) below. Neighboring countries may have experienced increased demand for LPG for a variety of applications such as cooking, heating, or industrial processes, resulting in increased South African exports to those regions. Additionally, South African LPG may have been competitively priced in the export market compared to other sources, making it an appealing option for buyers.

Figure 5: Petroleum Products exports percentage share

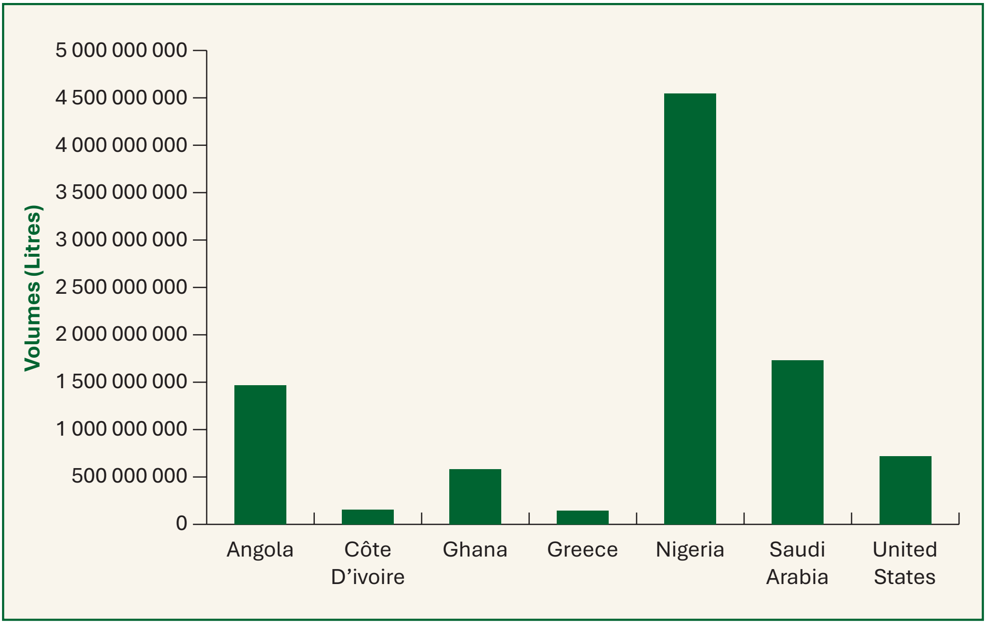


Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

2.1.3 Crude oil and petroleum products imports per country of origin

Nigeria and Saudi Arabia accounted for 48 percent (4.5 billion litres) and 18 percent (1.7 billion litres) of South Africa's crude oil imports in 2024, respectively, from 47 percent (3.9 billion litres) and 24 percent (2.0 billion litres) in 2023. Angola, USA and Ghana accounted for 15 percent (1.5 billion litres), 8 percent (718 million litres) and 6 percent (584 million litres) respectively. The remainder of the volumes came different countries as depicted in Figure 6 below.

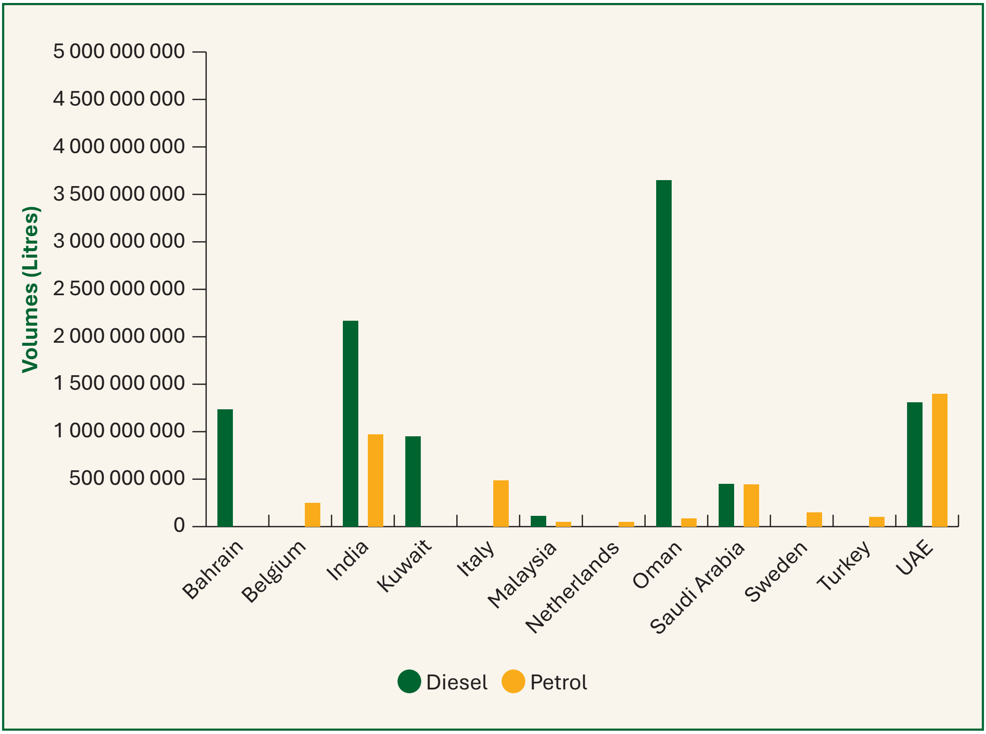
Figure 6: Crude oil imports per country of origin



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

In 2024, Oman and India accounted for 34 percent (3.6 billion litres) and 20 percent (2.1 billion litres) of South Africa's diesel imports, respectively. United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain accounted for 12 percent (1.3 billion litres) and 11 percent (1.2 billion litres) respectively, whilst small volumes were imported from different countries. The UAE and India accounted for 35 percent (1.4 billion litres) and 24 percent (971 million litres) of South Africa's petrol imports in 2024, respectively. Italy came in third at 12 percent (489 million litres) and Saudi Arabia at 11 percent (4445 million litres). The rest was sourced from other countries in small quantities (Figure 7).

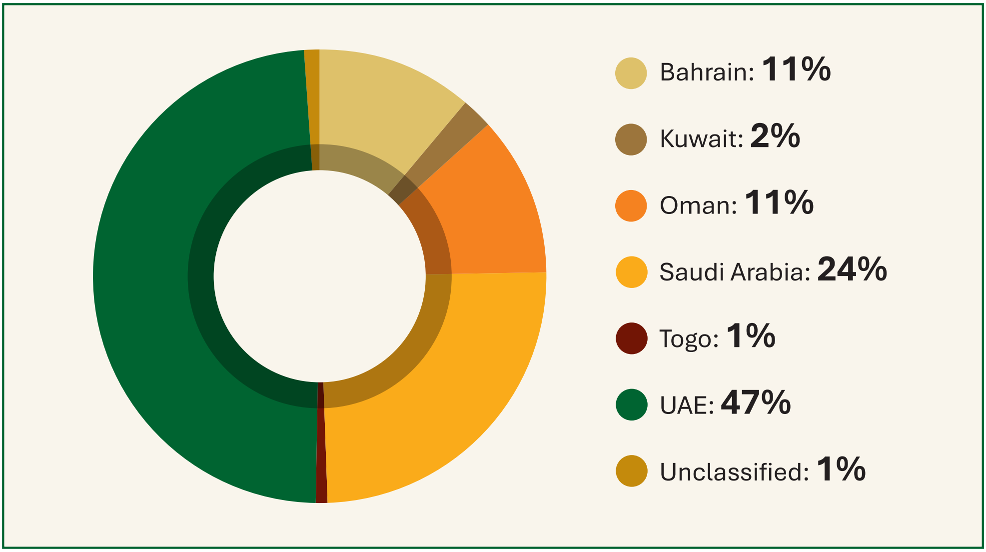
Figure 7: Diesel and petrol imports per country of origin



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

The UAE accounted for 47 percent (335 million litres) of jet fuel imports in 2024, up from 32 percent (218 million litres) imported in 2023. Saudi Arabia came in second with 24 percent (174 million litres), up from 12 percent (83 million litres) in 2023. Third place goes to Bahrain and Oman, with 11 percent each (81 and 79 million litres), followed by Kuwait at 2 percent (17 million litres). The rest of the countries each supplied smaller quantities to South Africa (Figure 8).

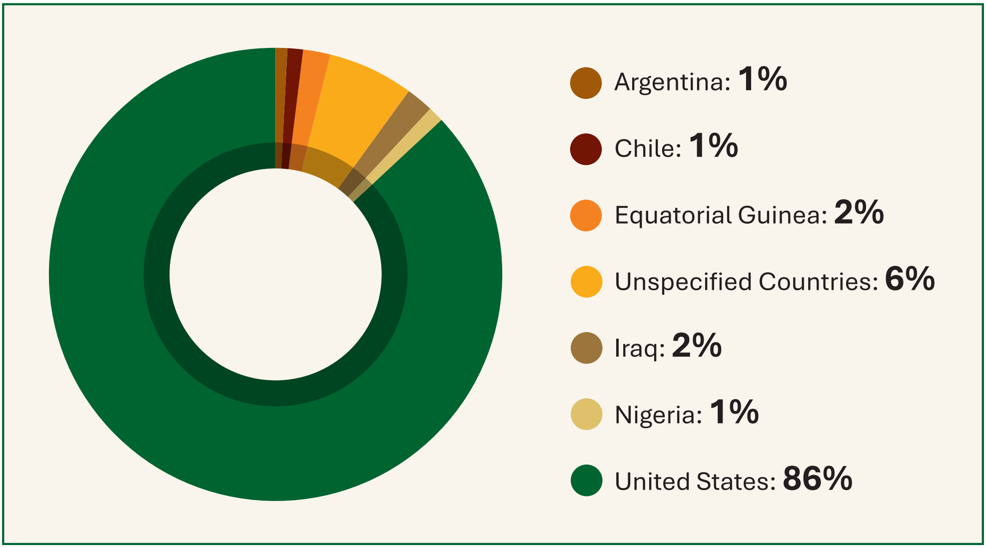
Figure 8: Jet fuel imports per country of origin percentage share



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

In 2024, the USA remained the leading supplier of LPG at 86 percent (920 million litres) from 88 percent (762million litres) in 2023. LPG imports from unspecified countries accounted to 6 percent (67 million litres) in 2024, from 1 percent (12 million) in 2023, then, Equatorial Guinea 2 percent (23 million litres), Iraq 2 percent (23 million litres), Chile 1 percent (16 percent), Argentina 1 percent (10 million litres), and Nigeria 1 percent (9 million litres).

Figure 9: LPG imports per country of origin percentage share

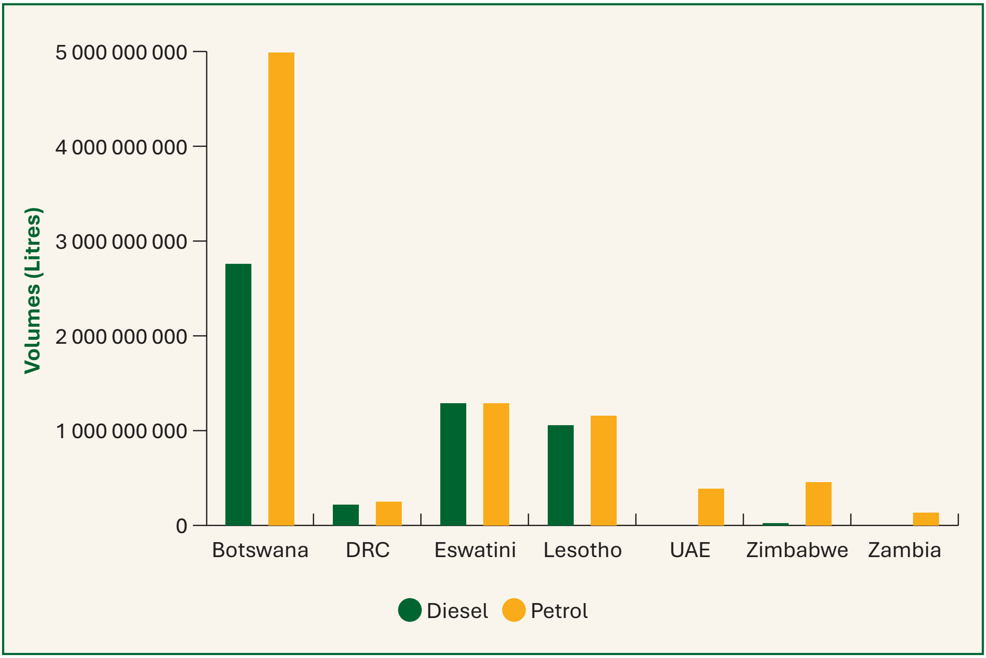


Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

2.1.4 Petroleum products exports per destination country

Diesel exports from South Africa decreased from 415 million litres (44 percent) in 2023 to 276 million litres (35 percent) in 2024, down from. Furthermore, in 2024, the country exported 499 litres (54 percent) of petrol, down from 628 million litres (62 percent) of petrol in 2023. Both diesel and petrol were largely exported from Botswana. South Africa also exported petrol to its neighbouring countries which include DRC 25 million litres (3 percent), Eswatini 129 million litres (14 percent), Lesotho 116 million litres (13 percent), Zambia 13 million litres (1 percent) and Zimbabwe 46 million litres (5 percent). Diesel was also exported to DRC 22 million litres (3 percent), Eswatini 129 million litres (16 percent) and Lesotho 106 million litres (13 percent), as depicted in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Petrol and diesel exports per destination country



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

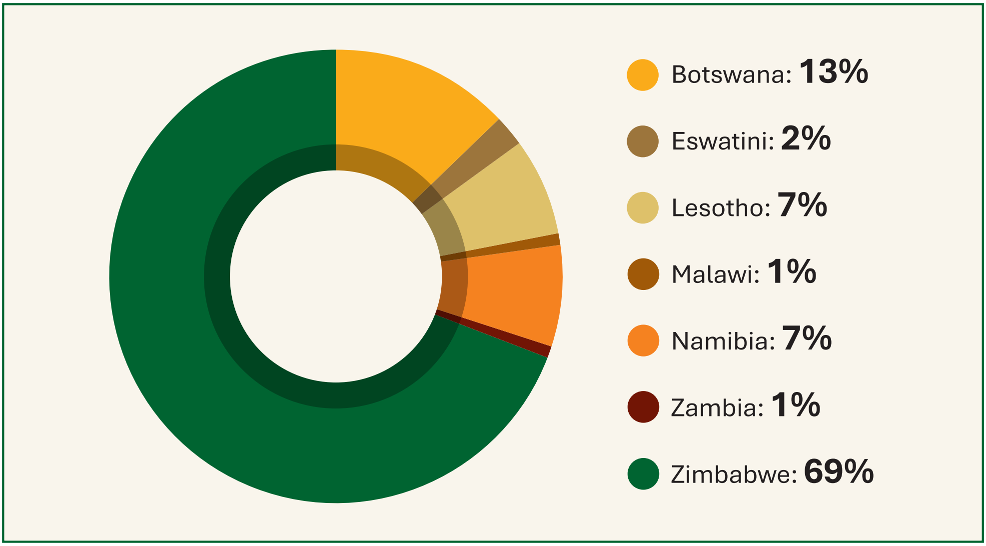
Most of South Africa's jet fuel was again exported to ships and aircrafts in 2024, at 94 percent (445 million litres) from 96 percent (435 million litres) in 2023, with only 4 percent (17 million litres) from 3 percent (13 million litres) exported to Botswana in 2023. Once more in 2024, the largest exports of IP were to Lesotho at 76 percent (18 million litres) from 79 percent (23 million) in 2023, Swaziland at 13 percent (3 million litres) from 15 percent (4 million) in 2023 and Botswana at 8 percent (1 million litres) from 6 percent (2 million) in 2023. Other neighbouring countries received the remaining exports. See Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: Jet fuel and IP exports per destination country

Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

In 2024, South Africa's top destination country for LPG exports was still Zimbabwe, with 69 percent (243 million litres) up from 56 percent (141 million litres). Botswana came in second with 13 percent (46 million) from 18 percent (44 million litres) in 2023, Namibia with 7 percent (25 million) from 7 percent (18 million litres), and Lesotho with 7 percent (23 million litres) from 4 percent (10 million litres) in 2023. Smaller amounts were exported to other neighbouring countries. See Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: LPG exports per destination country

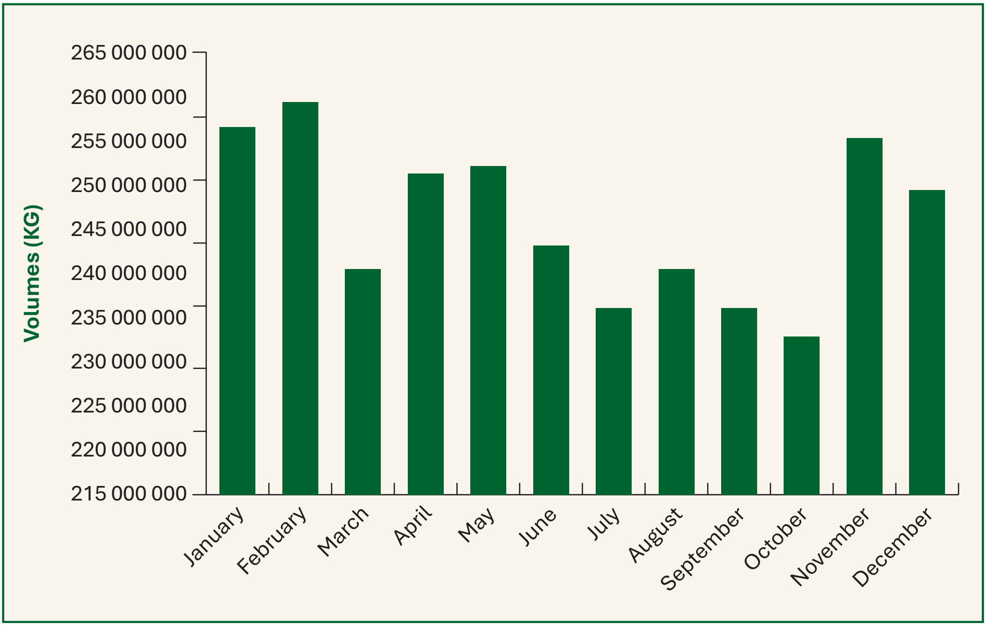


Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

2.2 Natural gas

In 2024, South Africa imported approximately 3.0 billion kilograms of natural gas from Mozambique, the same quantity as the year before. The volume of imports reached its highest point in February 2024, totalling 259 million kilograms, and its lowest point in October 2024, with 234 million grams. Long-term gas supply agreements between South African organizations (such as Sasol) and Mozambican gas producers are likely to result in a generally stable annual offtake volume. The current pipeline infrastructure (such as the Rompco pipeline) has a set capacity and is designed for a specific flow rate. The volumes variations are depicted in Figure 13 below.

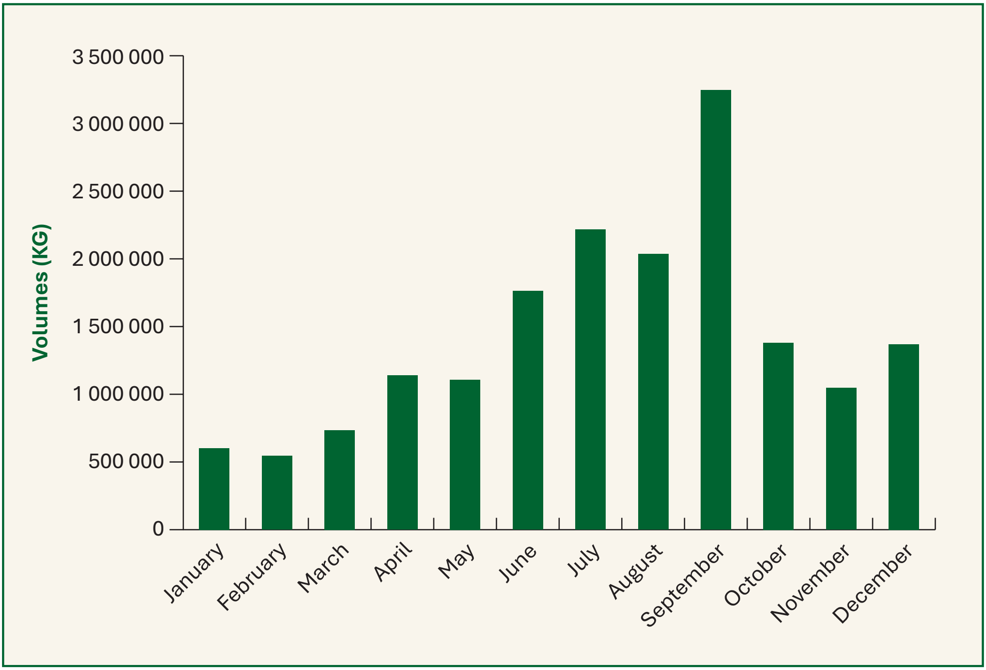
Figure 13: Natural gas imports



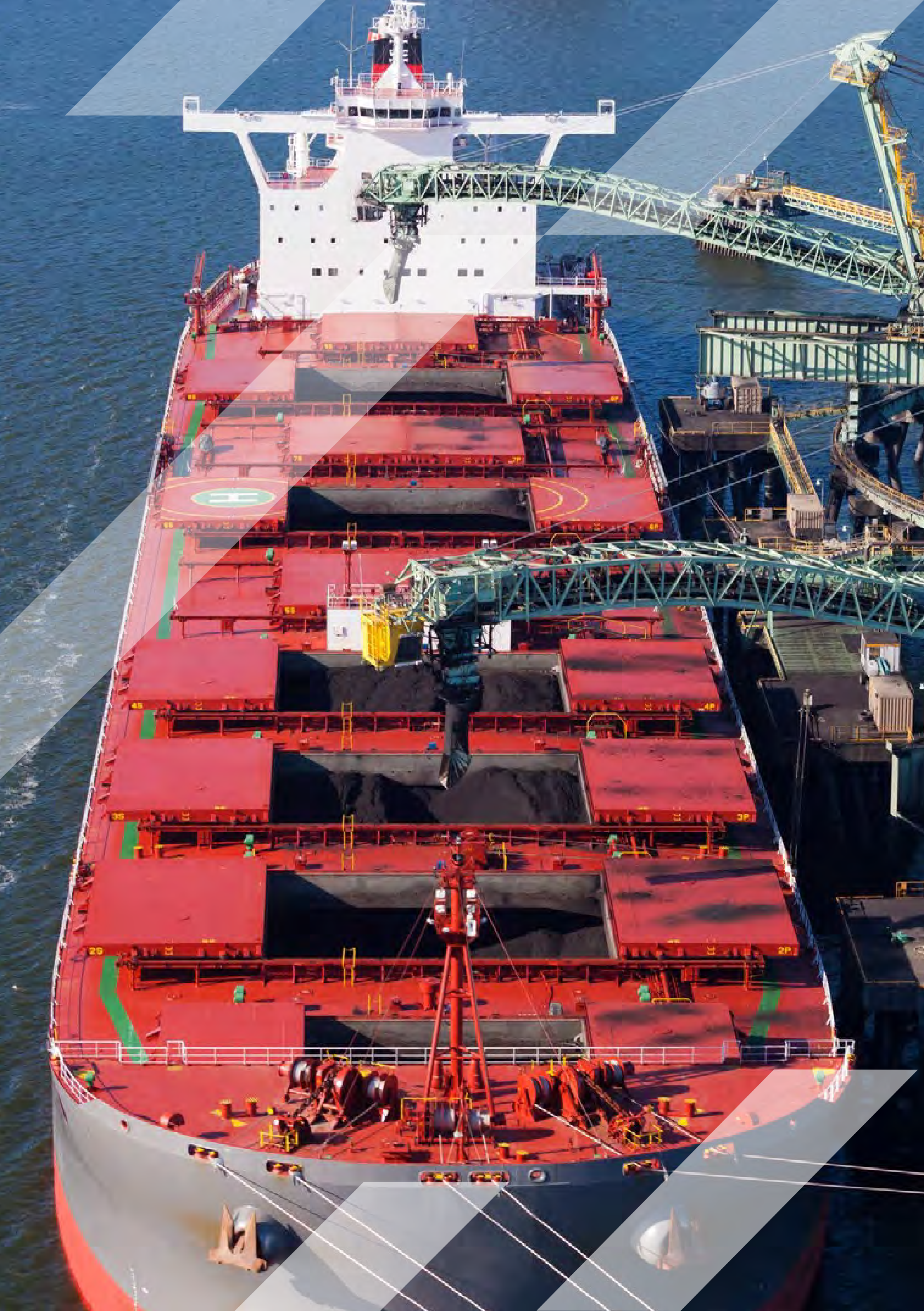
Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

The total of 17 million kilograms of natural gas was exported in 2024, up from 9 million kilograms in 2023. The largest amount of natural gas exported by South Africa was 3 million kilograms in September 2024, while the smallest amount was 544 thousand kilograms in February of the same year (Figure 14). Majority of the exports were destined to Zimbabwe at 59 percent (10 million kilograms), followed by Eswatini at 16 percent (3 million kilograms), Lesotho at 13 percent (2 million kilograms) and Namibia at 8 percent (1 million kilograms). The remainder was exported to other neighbouring countries in smaller quantities.

Figure 14: Natural gas exports



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

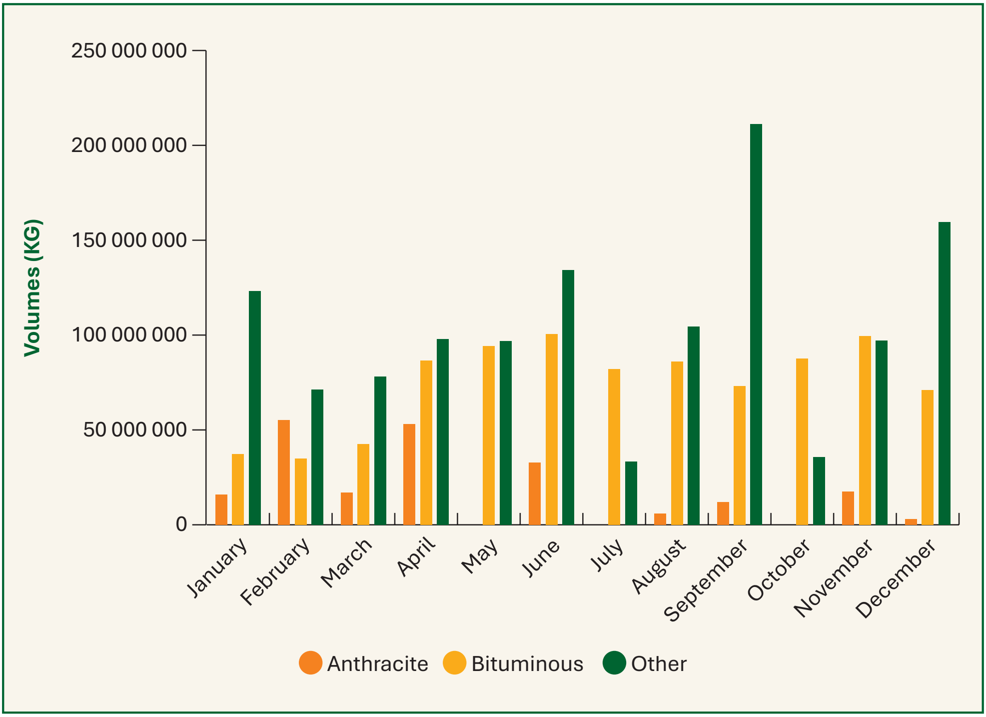


2.3 Coal

2.3.1 Coal imports and exports

In 2024, South Africa imported 1.0 billion kilograms (53 percent) of coking coal, compared to 2.0 billion kilograms (52 percent) in 2023. Bituminous coal accounted for 896 million kilograms (38 percent) in 2024, from 1.3 billion kilograms (38 percent) in 2023, and 212 million kilograms (9 percent) of anthracite in 2024, from 627 million kilograms (16 percent) in 2023 was imported as depicted in Figure 15.

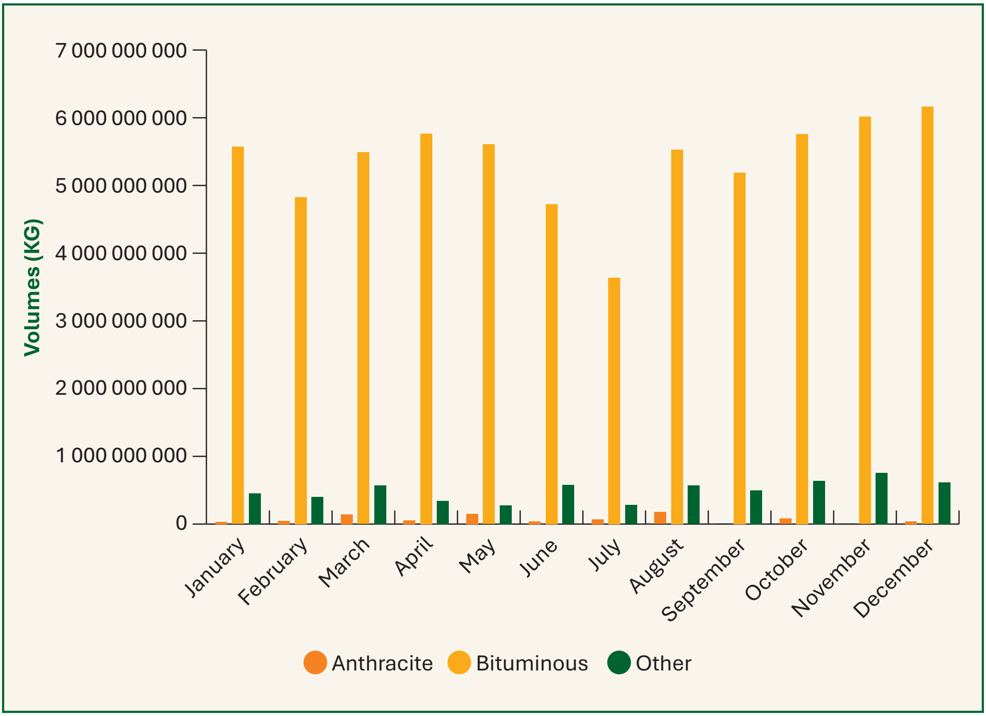
Figure 15: Coal imports



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

During the period under review, South Africa's top coal export was bituminous coal, which increased from 63.3 billion kilograms (86 percent) in 2023 to 64.3 billion kilograms (90 percent) in 2024. Other types of coal exports decreased from 9.6 billion kilograms (13 percent) in 2023 to 5.9 billion kilograms (8 percent) in 2024, while anthracite coal exports increased from 697 million kilograms (1 percent) in 2023 to 829 million kilograms (1 percent) in 2024 (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Coal exports

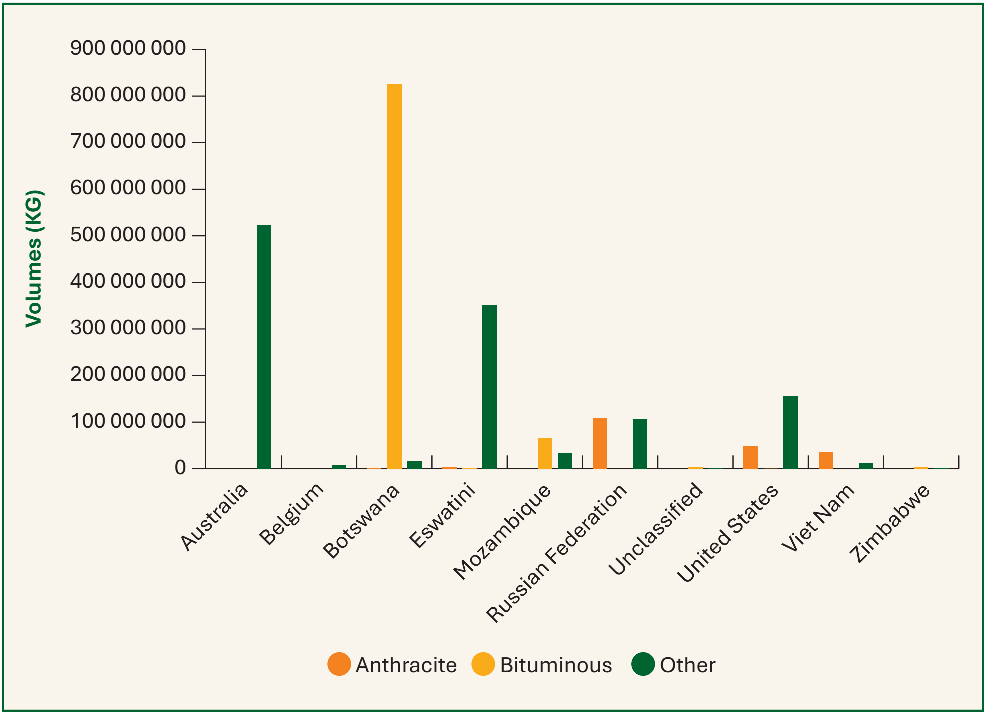


Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

2.3.2 Coal trade between South Africa and other countries

Of South Africa's total coal imports in 2024, 36 percent (844 million kilograms) came from Botswana, 22 percent (523 million kilograms) from Australia, and 15 percent (355 million kilograms) from Eswatini. Botswana accounted for 92 percent (825 million kilograms) of the bituminous coal imported by South Africa, while seven percent (66 million kilograms) came from Mozambique. Furthermore, the country imported 42 percent (523 million kilograms) of other coal from Australia, 28 percent (351 million kilograms) from Eswatini and 13 percent (156 kilograms) from the United States. The majority of anthracite coal imports were from the Russian Federation at 51 percent (108 million kilograms) whereas United States and Vietnam accounted 23 percent (48 million kilograms) and 16 percent (35 million kilograms) (Figure 17) respectively.

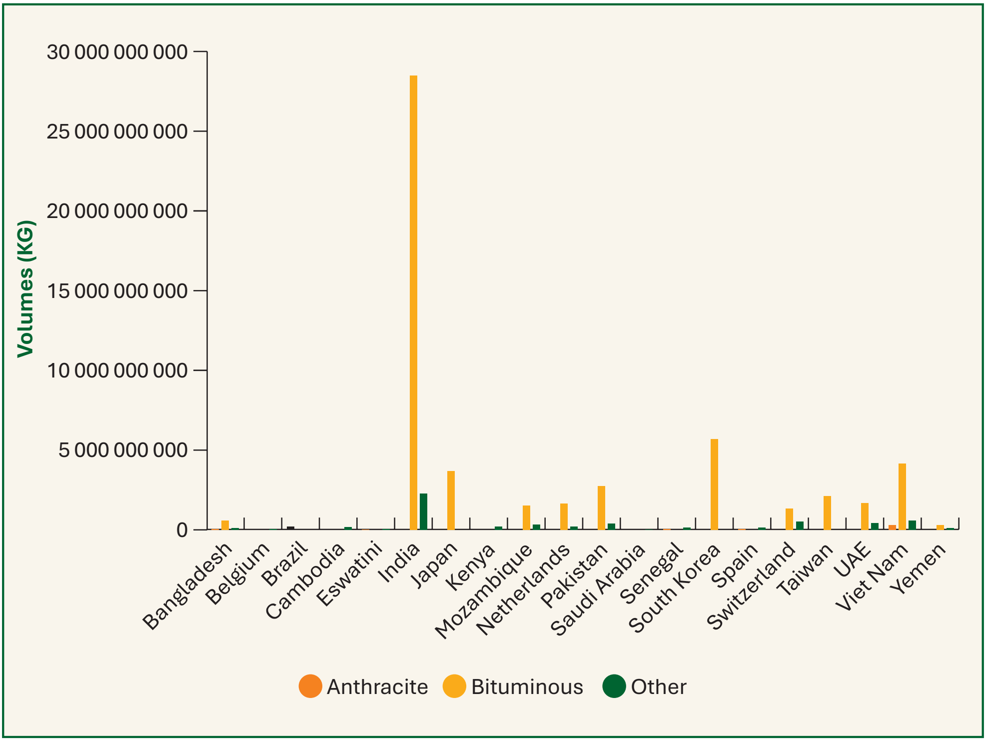
Figure 17: Coal imports by country of origin



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

Large quantities of bituminous coal were exported by South Africa to India accounting for 43 percent (28 billion kilograms) of total coal exports in 2024, up from 33 percent (20 billion kilograms) in 2023. South Korea ranked second with 9 percent (5 billion kilograms), followed by Japan and Vietnam with 6 percent, (3 billion kilograms) and (4 billion kilograms), respectively, and Pakistan with 4 percent, (2 billion kilograms). (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Coal exports per destination country



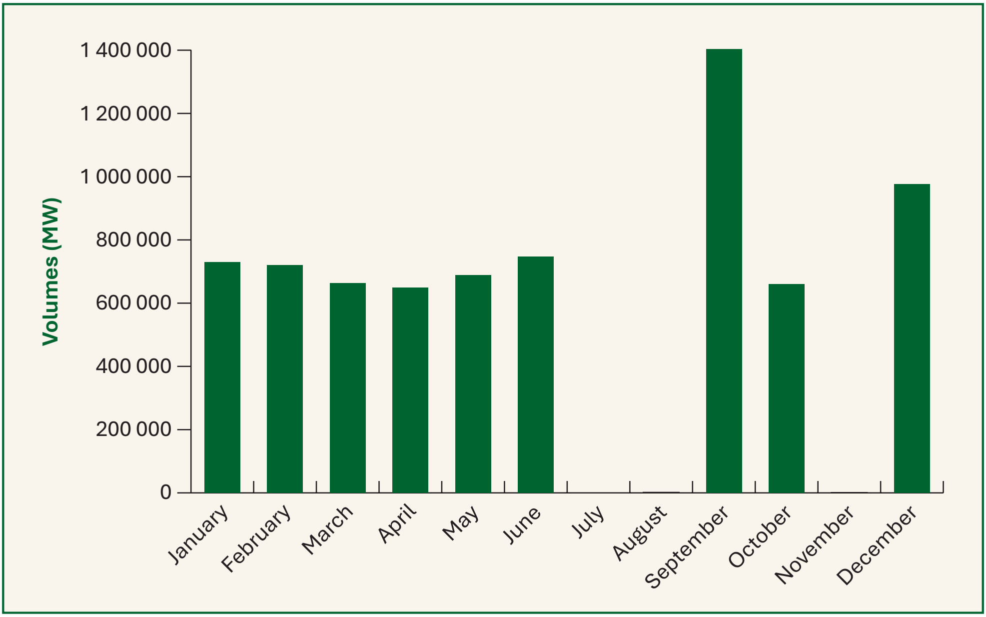
Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

2.4 Electricity

An improved unplanned plant failure rate and comparatively greater planned maintenance in 2024 were the key drivers of Eskom's yearly average EAF's progressive improvement to 60 percent from an average of 55 percent in 2023. Due to a rise in the use of private sector generation capacity, Eskom's energy demand fell by an average of 3 percent this year. As a result, loadshedding was eliminated starting in April 2024 and the use of diesel generators was reduced to an average of 6 percent in 2024 from 12 percent in 2023 due to a combination of decreased energy demand and a gradual increase in Eskom's EAF (CSIR, 2025).

In 2024, South Africa imported 7 242 GWh of electricity, compared with 8 054 GWh in 2023. Majority of our electricity was supplied by Mozambique accounting for 7 234 GWh. In July 2024, no electricity was imported, while in August 2024, only 1,319 MW of electricity was imported. Most the nation's electricity imports, totalling 1,403 GWh was recorded in September 2024, but fell to 601 MWh in November 2024, the lowest for the year as depicted in Figure 19 below.

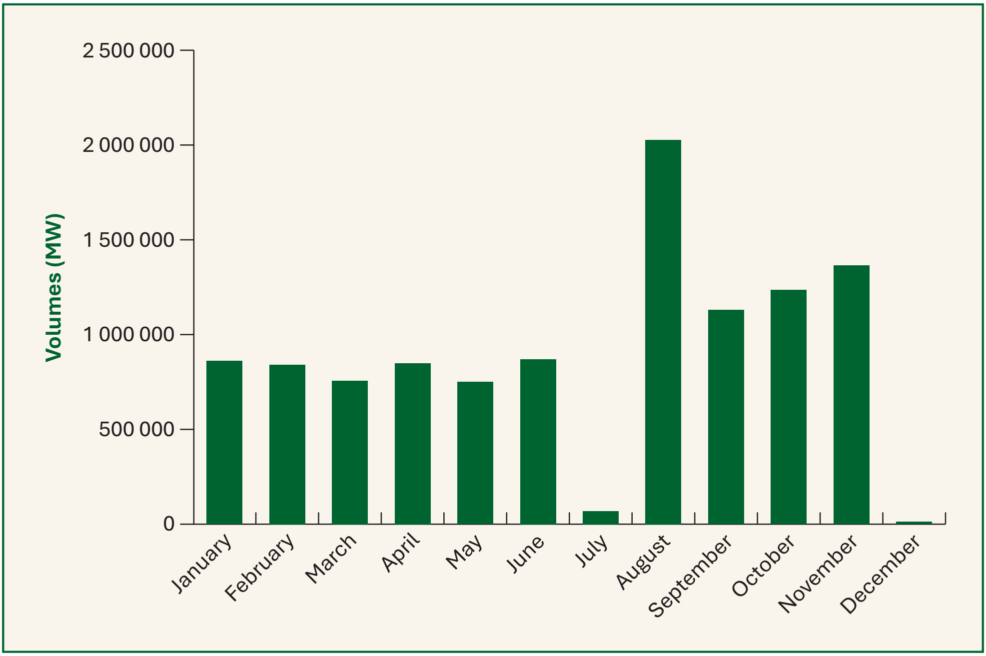
Figure 19: Electricity imports



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

South Africa exported 10 768 GWh of electricity in 2024, compared to 11 637 GWh in 2023. The country's largest export volume for the year was 2 027 GWh in August 2024, while December 2024 saw the lowest export volume of 13 MWh (Figure 20).

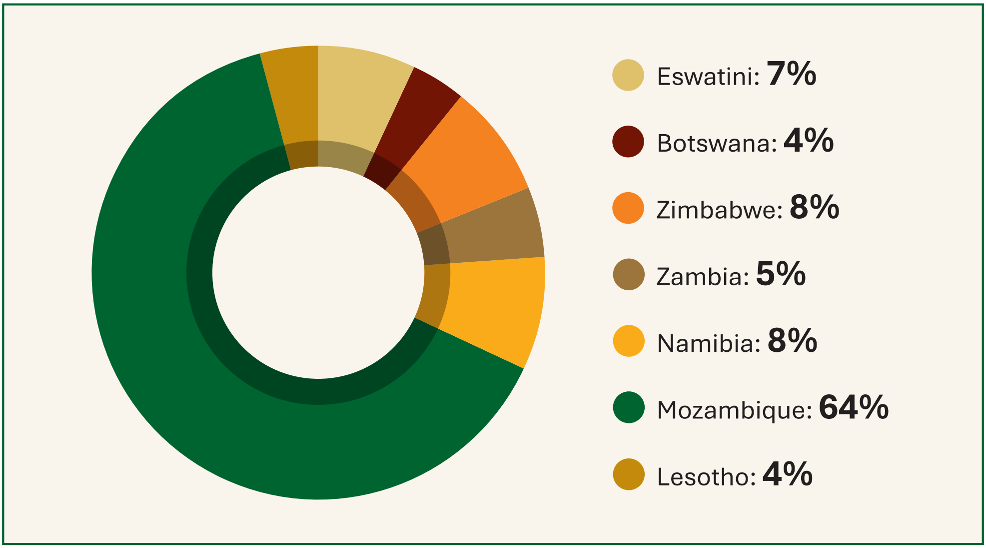
Figure 20: Electricity exports



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

South Africa exports as much electricity to SADC countries as it imports from them. Despite a decrease in percentage share from 68 percent (8 million GWh) in 2023, to 64 percent (7 million MWh in 2024, Mozambique remained the largest recipient of South Africa's electricity exports in 2024. Namibia comes in second with 8 percent (851 thousand MW) in 2024, from 5 percent (554 thousand MW), then, Zimbabwe with 8 percent (818 thousand MW) in 2024, from 7 percent (871 thousand MW) in 2023. Eswatini follows with 7 percent (741 thousand MW) from 6 percent (648 thousand MW) in 2023 and Zambia with 5 percent (584 thousand MW) from 0.4 percent (44 thousand MW) in 2023. Finally, Botswana and Lesotho with 4 percent (426 million MW) and (417 million MW) in 2024, respectively, from 10 percent (1 million GWh) and 377 thousand MW) respectively in 2023. See Figure 21 below.

Figure 21: Electricity exports per destination country



Source: South African Revenue Service (SARS)

3. CONCLUSION

In 2024, natural gas and crude oil were net imports for South Africa. Diesel was the most imported petroleum product during the period under review. These products were mostly imported to make up the difference in local supplies. Due to a plentiful supply of bituminous coal, South Africa remained a net importer of other forms of coal. South Africa continued to be a net exporter of bituminous coal due to its abundance in the country and a net importer of other types of coal. South Africa imported 7 2428 054 GWh of electricity in 2024 and exported 7 percent less than the year before.

Basically, South Africa's energy situation in 2024 was defined by a reliance on imports of natural gas, crude oil, and, notably, diesel to meet domestic needs. While the country used its enormous bituminous coal reserves to generate significant exports, it also imported other forms of coal. In the electrical industry, imports were critical in augmenting domestic generation, while exports fell slightly compared to the previous year. These trends reflect South Africa's complicated energy mix and its reliance on both domestic resources and international trade to fuel its economy.

With a notable move towards renewable energy sources and a reassessment of conventional fossil fuel plans, 2024 was an important year for the global energy landscape overall.

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