

15.12.2025

Growth Points: Why “New” Logistics Are The Future Of Russian Exports

The practice of supply chain management that has developed over the past few years shows that the Russian export trade remains in the black by focusing on Asian markets and proper route architecture. Despite falling commodity prices, Russian exports may strengthen for the account of products of deep processing, machinery, and agro-industry, especially to the Asia-Pacific (APR) and Middle Eastern countries. This confirms that the focus on Asia and the creation of supply chains, capable of quickly responding to geopolitical and infrastructural challenges, remains key. For Russian businesses, the path to growth lies outside of traditional markets, and the future will be won by those who invest in supply chains, logistics, and partnerships.

Meanwhile, the demands for the quality of logistics services are growing. The demand for freight and logistics services is increasing, especially for those that could offer comprehensive “turnkey” support and settlements in friendly jurisdictions. This is accompanied by a rise in domestic warehouse rental rates, which reflects the limited new warehouse capacity and high utilization of existing facilities. For us, as an industrial exporter, this means we need to stay ahead of the curve: plan logistics capacity, reserve warehouses and routes in advance, and actively use outsourcing to optimize costs.

As the year draws to a close, it demonstrates that Russia is confidently and methodically moving from reaction to strategy, from adaptation to creation. If the previous years focused on searching alternatives and building sustainable channels, then the

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year of 2025 is about their institutionalization and reinforcement.

One of the landmark events of the year was the signing of the Agreement on the Promotion and Mutual Protection of Investments between Russia and China. For Russian businesses, such an agreement means reduced uncertainty for large projects with a long-term horizon. Thus, for instance, Russian companies considering joint projects with Chinese partners in the Russian Far East and Siberia can now focus on more transparent terms: investment protection, clear rules for cross-border activities, and long-term guarantees from both states.

Under Russian efforts to bolster Eurasian integration logistics, the Joint Action Plan for the period up to 2027, focused on deepening cooperation in economics, transport, energy, industrial cooperation, digitalization, and logistics, was adopted at the “Russia-Central Asia” summit, the plan will provide for greater delivery route opportunities, elimination of barriers and increased predictability for product transportation along the Central Asia – China – Southeast Asia line.

In addition to infrastructure, the state continues to develop its systemic support for logistics. Russian exporters can take advantage of a government support program for product transportation, when they are reimbursed for up to 80 % of the delivery costs to Russia’s border. Full-cycle transportation services are available – from plant gate to the final destination abroad – as well as free logistics consultations, providing indicative costs of services and routes. These measures allow exporters, even those with small trade volumes, to enter international markets with reduced risk and less working capital strain.

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Based on the assessments of domestic and foreign experts, the trends of 2023-2024 still persist: multimodal transport in the eastern direction remains the most in-demand, especially to China and Southeast Asia. Due to the unstable situation in the Red Sea, container shipping rates to the Persian Gulf and South Asia continue to rise, making land routes through Iran and Central Asia more competitive. These solutions help minimize sanctions risks and increase supply flexibility.

One of the notable practical steps in this direction was the launch of a route through Iran. RZD Logistics sent the first container train from Russia via Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the Iranian dry port of Aprin, delivering 62 forty-foot containers with sulfate pulp for recipients in Iran and Iraq; the transit time was 13 days. This is a prime example for exporters of how new transport corridors are no longer just projects on paper and become real working routes. The option to transport goods via Iran provides a new gateway to the Middle Eastern and South Asian markets, which is particularly important in the context of diversifying trade routes.

A positive case study of an operational supply chain under new conditions in a real-world scenario is presented by SVEZA corporation, a Russian exporter of pulp and wood products, which has increased the volume of its railway container shipments to the Middle East by 45%. This fact reflects how the manufacturer was able to build a logistics chain: from on-site production, loading into containers, delivery to own storage site, transfer of cargo to a railway operator, transit across Russian railway corridors to an exit point and further on to a foreign customer. For us, this case is not just a growth value, but a model: systematic inventory management, containerization, strict control of logistics hubs, utilization of railway routes and multimodal combinations boosted competitiveness of the company.

It is impossible not to mention the “northern” logistics. In 2025 the construction of the Lavna universal year-round port in the Murmansk region is nearing completion (test export shipments have been carried out since March). This port is intended to play a key role in the reorientation of the cargo base towards domestic capacities and in the development of trade routes to Asia-Pacific countries. This is not just a new point on the map, but an opportunity to ship goods year-round, which is especially important for northern shipments. Implementation of such projects ensures that the Russian Arctic logistics and the Northern Sea Route are transitioning from a backup to a strategically vital corridor. Here, prospects for stable supplies to Asia and the domestic market via northern hubs are opening up.

Central Asian cooperation backed at the Dushanbe summit, the launch of the Iranian corridor, the formation of northern ports, and the return of the Arctic to focus — all of this creates a new infrastructure reality for exporters. We see how balanced, multi-vector logistics is being formed, where each route – from Lavna to Aprin – becomes part of an integrated Eurasian transit

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network.

For Russian business, this year has become a year of systemic development: Logistics has ceased to be just a supply tool and has become the basis for competitiveness. New infrastructure projects, diplomatic agreements, and regional partnerships have made it possible not only to maintain but also to develop exports, focusing on the markets with rising demand and space, available for industrial growth. In summary, we can confidently say: Russian international trade is becoming an integral part of a large Eurasian system, backed by its own resources, routes and strategic interests.

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