

# MEA Barge Transportation Market Opportunity, Growth Drivers, Industry Trend Analysis, and Forecast 2025 - 2034

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## Abstracts

The MEA Barge Transportation Market was valued at USD 2.15 billion in 2024 and is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 7% to reach USD 4.17 billion by 2034.

The Middle East and Africa (MEA) barge transportation market is driven by increasing intra-regional trade, port expansions, and demand for cost-effective bulk logistics. Barge transport operators are still at the initial stage of adopting digital tracking and automated scheduling and fleet management platforms to improve overall efficiency and transparency. However, real-time cargo monitoring with route optimization tools has helped provide predictability in delivery schedules for domestic and cross-border trade.

The MEA barge transportation sector growth is heavily linked to the increase in trade of oil, gas, minerals, and agricultural commodities. Crude oil and refined products movements will continue to dominate for many countries, such as Nigeria and Iraq, that mainly rely on inland waterways for transporting these commodities, while countries like Sudan and Egypt are exploring barge transport as a more efficient way to discharge grains and fertilizers. This need to ensure secure and low-cost transport of these fundamental goods is translating into increased demand for barge operations, thereby strengthening inland energy and agricultural trade corridors as glaring market growth strategies.

The liquid cargo segment held a 45% share in 2024 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6% through 2025-2034. In the MEA barge transportation market, liquid cargo makes up the largest segment, and the region is heavily reliant on petroleum products, chemicals, and refined oil by barge. Inland waterways and coastal barge routes are utilized to facilitate the movements of crude oil, diesel, and gasoline in countries like

Nigeria, Iraq, and Egypt. The barge for liquid bulk is not only efficient but also significantly lower in cost and safer to move, which is important in meeting the demands of industrial operations and continuously providing supplies for export and energy. Barge transportation of liquid cargo is an essential part of the fluidity and legacy of the energy supply chain in the region.

The opened barge segment held a 41% share in 2024, and the segment is expected to grow at a CAGR of 8% from 2025 to 2034. Opened barges represent the largest segment in the MEA barge transportation market due to their versatility in carrying bulk commodities such as coal, iron ore, grains, construction materials, and containers. Their open-top design makes it easy to load and unload heavy and oversized cargo efficiently, and they are typically the cheapest option for transporting goods by water, whether inland or coastal.

UAE Barge Transportation Market held a 35% share and generated USD 384.3 million in 2024. The largest market for barge transportation in the Middle East is in the UAE. This is due to its favorable location along some of the world's largest shipping lanes, as well as with important ports such as Jebel Ali, Abu Dhabi, Khalifa, and Fujairah operating as regional hubs for bulk cargo (notably crude oil, petroleum products, and containers). As barges are a lower-cost option for intra-port and coastal logistics, and with the extensive infrastructure, modern port facilities, and the presence of global shipping companies, the UAE remains the largest regional market for barge transport.

The top companies in the MEA Barge Transportation Market are Gulf Agency Company, ADNOC Logistics & Services, ARTCo Barge & Stevedoring, Astro Offshore, African Marine Solutions, CMA CGM, and A.P. Moller - Maersk. To solidify their market position and expand their footprint, companies in the MEA barge transportation sector focus on several strategic initiatives. They are investing in digital transformation by integrating real-time tracking and automated fleet management systems to enhance operational efficiency and transparency. Building strong partnerships with port authorities, logistics providers, and key commodity producers allows them to secure steady cargo volumes and streamline supply chains.

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