



Consumer Logistics

Trend Report 2025

Introduction

The logistics industry is experiencing rapid and profound change, with global trends reshaping the way goods are stored, transported and delivered. From sustainability and digitisation to resilience and horizontal collaboration, leaders like Kuehne+Nagel are at the forefront of innovation. This report identifies and explores the top developments expected to dominate logistics through 2025 and beyond. It also highlights emerging trends, including the importance of last-mile delivery, e-commerce growth and the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics. These will have significant implications for logistics providers and their customers.



1

Navigating the sustainability revolution

Sustainability is no longer optional—it is imperative. Logistics companies are under pressure from governments, consumers and shareholders to reduce their environmental footprint. Most respond with investments in low-carbon technologies, sustainable practices and renewable energy.

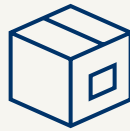
Reducing emissions and resource consumption is central to corporate strategies, underscoring sustainability's vital role in shaping the future of business.





1.1 Alternative fuels and vehicles

The adoption of alternative fuels, such as electric vehicles (EVs), biofuels and hydrogen-powered vehicles, is rapidly expanding. For example, Kuehne+Nagel has invested in a fleet of electric trucks and low-emission vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and comply with international environmental regulations. EVs not only help reduce carbon footprints but also cut fuel costs and position logistics providers to meet future regulations.



1.2 Sustainable warehousing and packaging

Warehousing is another area ripe for sustainability improvements. Energy-efficient facilities powered by renewable sources like solar and wind are more common. For packaging, the shift to reducing single-use plastics and increasing recyclability is gaining traction. Sustainable warehousing and packaging practices benefit the environment and offer economic advantages. These solutions can reduce costs and environmental impact, while eco-friendly operations enhance overall efficiency.



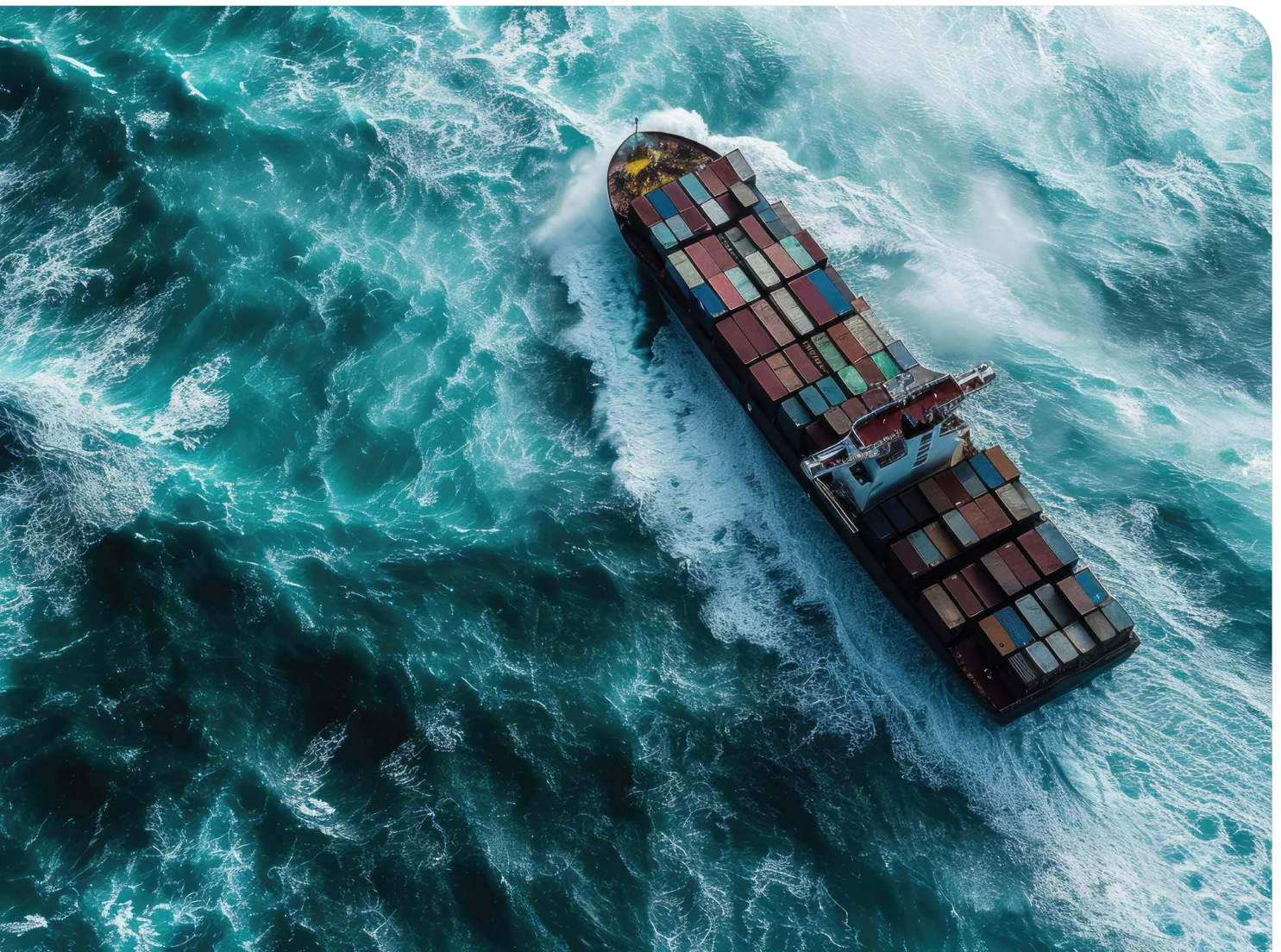
1.3 Carbon emissions commitments

As logistics companies set ambitious carbon reduction goals to align with global climate initiatives, Kuehne+Nagel has pledged to transition to a zero-carbon business model using the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Such commitments are essential for consumer trust and securing partnerships with eco-conscious customers. Carbon footprint tracking is more integrated into data transparency and provides clear metrics on environmental impacts.

2

Resilience— Robust supply chains challenge uncertainty

In recent years, global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and natural disasters have highlighted the need for supply chain elasticity. Enterprises invest in systems and strategies that mitigate risks and ensure continuity in times of crisis. Building resilience has become essential for the logistics industry to navigate and withstand future disruptions.





2.1 Multi-sourcing and diversification

Supply chain diversification—from multi-sourcing to nearshoring—is a common strategy to mitigate the risks associated with relying on a single provider or region. Multi-sourcing from different countries, especially those closer to end markets, assures disruptions in one region don't immobilise entire supply chains.



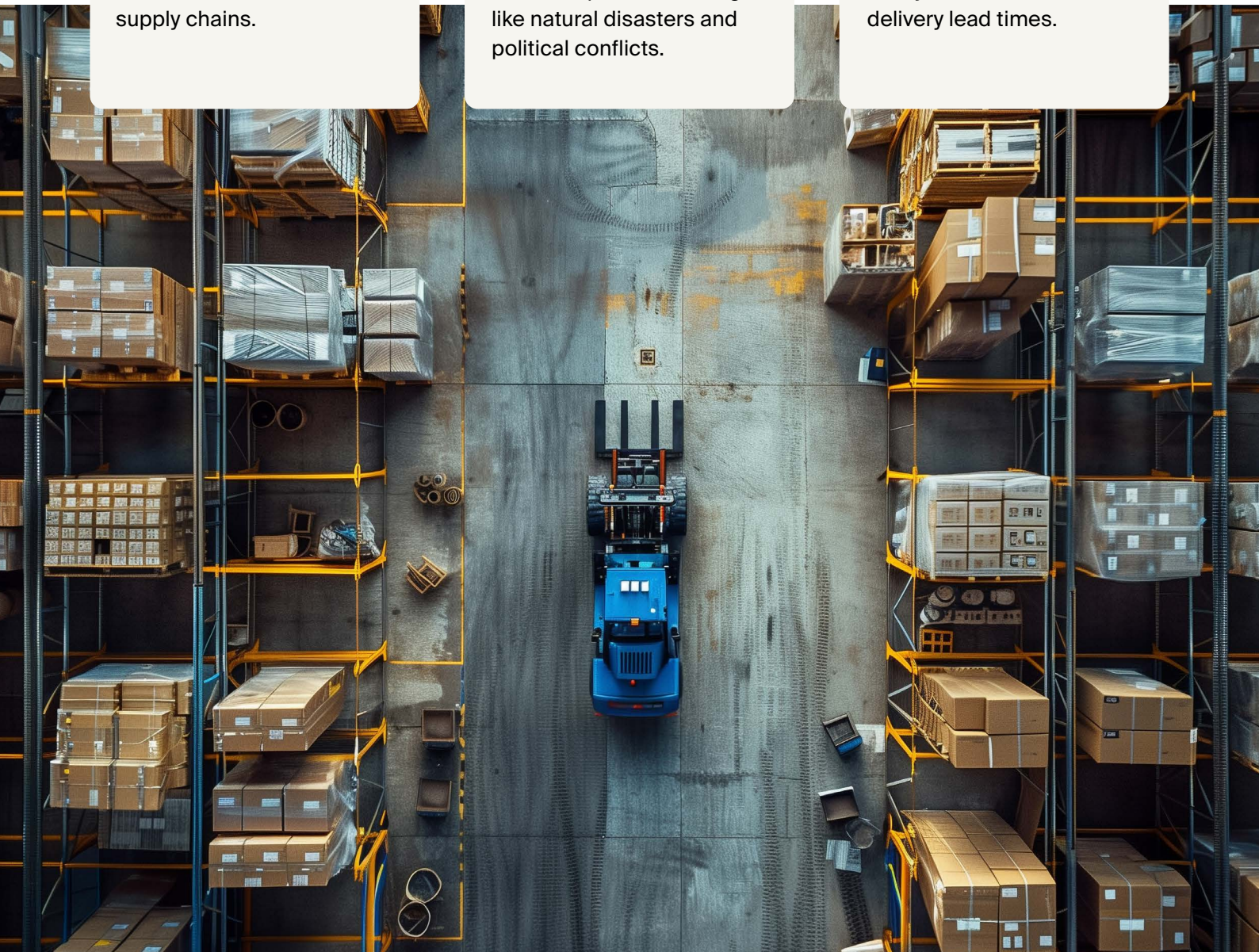
2.2 Risk management

Advanced analytics and real-time risk management tools are now vital for mitigating potential disruptions. Predictive modelling and data analytics allow Kuehne+Nagel to forecast supply chain bottlenecks and act before issues escalate. This approach supports greater agility and helps businesses recover quickly from unexpected challenges like natural disasters and political conflicts.



2.3 Tactical warehousing and inventory

As operations reassess inventory strategies, there is a shift toward higher inventory levels and stock distribution across multiple locations to ensure agility in times of crisis. Warehouses are more flexible, providing scalable solutions to store goods close to key markets and reduce delivery lead times.



3

Strategic partnerships

Horizontal collaboration refers to cooperation between logistics companies, often competitors, to achieve mutual benefits like cost savings and improved service. The trend is being driven by increased logistics complexity and the need for efficient asset use.



3.1 Shared services

With shared warehouse space and transportation networks, freight forwarders can maximise their capacity and reduce empty miles. This strategy lowers operational costs and minimises environmental impacts. For instance, Kuehne+Nagel engages in strategic partnerships with other logistics companies to co-share facilities and reduce wasteful underutilisation of space and assets.



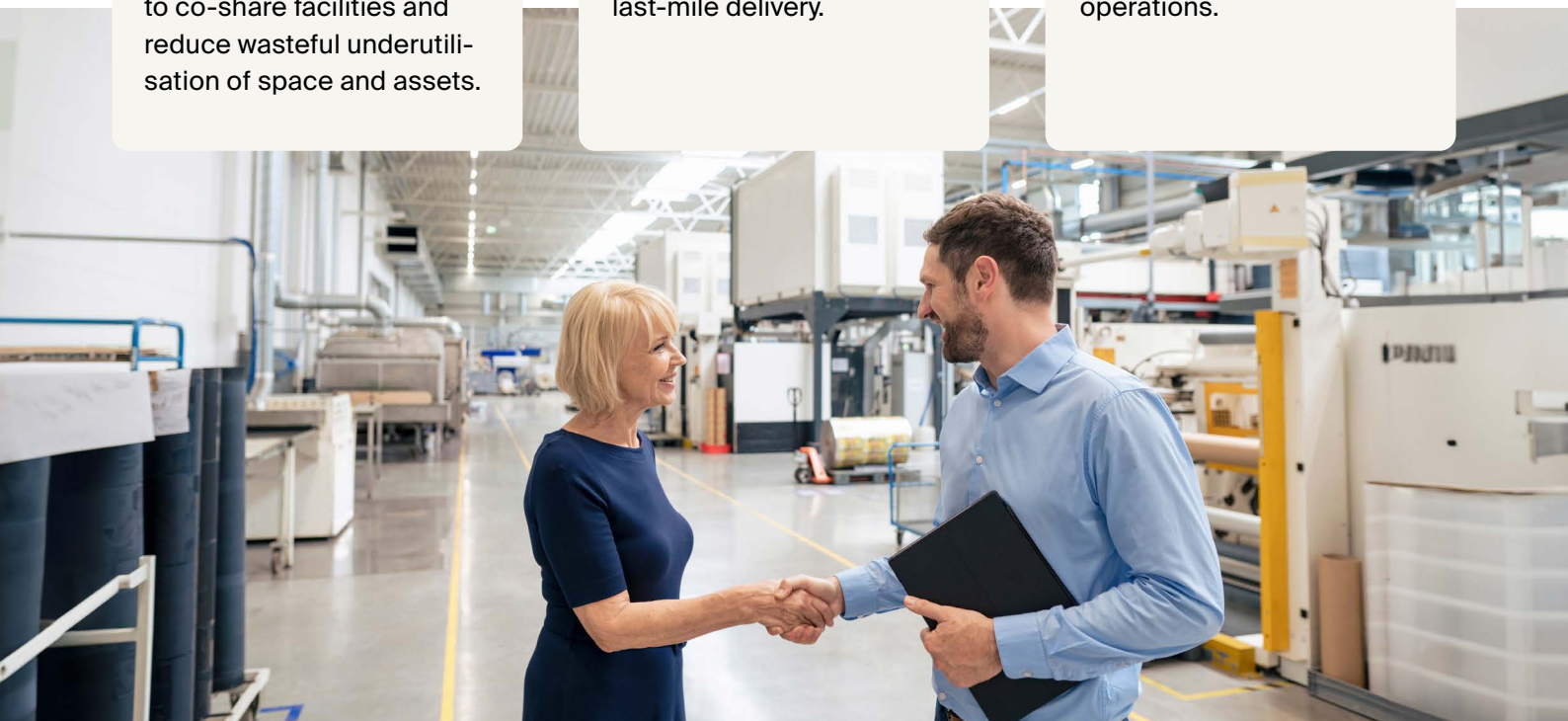
3.2 Collaborative data sharing

Collaboration isn't limited to physical assets. Companies now share data to improve tracking, streamline customs processes and increase visibility across global supply chains. These partnerships foster innovative digital platforms to optimise routes, reduce wait times and enhance last-mile delivery.



3.3 Regulatory and legal

Partnerships help meet compliance standards more effectively in areas with complex regulatory environments. By working together, companies can pool resources to navigate international trade regulations, customs clearance procedures and tax laws for smoother cross-border operations.



4

Digitisation— Embracing the power of technology

The logistics industry has embraced a digital transformation for advanced technologies such as AI, IoT (Internet of Things), blockchain and big data analytics. These innovations are revolutionising how companies manage their operations, enhance customer experiences and improve efficiency. Investing in technology is a strategic priority for CEOs, reflecting its critical role in driving growth and adaptability. Consequently, logistics companies are channelling resources into operational efficiency, data-driven insights, and robust technological infrastructure to stay competitive and meet regulatory requirements.





4.1 AI and Automation

AI and automation are transforming the industry for predictive maintenance, optimised routing, and the elimination of repetitive tasks. For example, AI-powered hyper-automation streamlines processes across the business to reduce human error and drive cost savings. Technology is crucial for regulatory compliance and sustainability initiatives that aim to improve fuel consumption and reduce carbon footprints.



4.2 IoT and tracking

The Internet of Things amplifies real-time shipment tracking and monitoring, giving logistics operations greater visibility and control. IoT sensors and automation systems have revolutionised warehouse management, facilitated smoother operations and minimised downtime. Real-time tracking platforms offer insights into shipment status and inventory levels, fostering trust and collaboration.



4.3 Data analytics

With metrics integral to operations, companies can leverage advanced analytics tools to gain valuable insights into performance, customer preferences and market trends. Predictive analytics empowers proactive strategies and better resource allocation, while data monetisation generates new revenue streams and offers personalised services.



5

Emerging trends



5.1 Last-mile delivery

As e-commerce grows, so does the importance of last-mile delivery. Organisations have invested in innovative solutions like drones, autonomous vehicles and local fulfilment centres to improve delivery speed and efficiency. These advancements are central to meeting customer expectations and maintaining a competitive edge. Kuehne+Nagel actively enhances last-mile delivery capabilities by integrating advanced technologies and optimising our logistics network for faster and more reliable deliveries.



5.2 E-commerce

As the e-commerce sector continues to grow, it drives demand for efficient logistics solutions. Through digital platforms and automation, providers are forging faster deliveries, real-time tracking and improved customer experiences. The trend has reshaped the landscape with new opportunities for innovation. Kuehne+Nagel uses our extensive network and digital platforms to support the growing e-commerce market and ensure seamless delivery services.



5.3 AI and data analytics

Both artificial intelligence and data analytics are integral to logistics operations. By leveraging advanced analytics tools, companies can gain valuable insights into customer preferences, market trends, and operational performance. Kuehne+Nagel is at the forefront of adopting these tools to offer customers data-driven insights and optimised supply chain solutions.

6

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A)





6.1 Key Drivers

Several factors are driving M&A activity in the T&L industry, including the need for companies to diversify and strengthen their positions both vertically and horizontally. Strategic investors are focusing on making their networks more resilient to secure supply chains and maintain control over operational variables. Additionally, the urge to transform and embrace digitalisation is opening further growth opportunities and triggering deals.



6.2 Regional Trends

Asia and Oceania continue to be favoured by financial and strategic investors. The region benefits from a growing middle class, diversified manufacturing and expanding trade networks. However, there is a noticeable shift away from China, with alternative markets such as India attracting more investment.



6.3 Notable deals

Notable transport and logistics sector transactions during the first half of 2024 include Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.'s acquisition of the remaining 36.3% stake in Cainiao Smart Logistics Network Ltd for \$3.75 billion. Additionally, the Hungarian government acquired an 80% stake in Budapest Airport Zrt, with France-based Vinci Airports SAS securing the remaining 20% in a deal valued at \$3.37 billion.



6.4 Impact of the DSV and Schenker merger

The merger between DSV and Schenker is a significant development in the landscape. It creates one of the largest logistics companies globally, enhancing their combined capabilities in freight forwarding, contract logistics and supply chain management. The merger is expected to drive synergies, improve operational efficiencies and expand their global reach. For Kuehne+Nagel, the merger underscores the importance of our strategic investments and partnerships to maintain a competitive edge in a rapidly consolidating market.

7

Strategic alliances and joint ventures (JV)

Strategic alliances and joint ventures are pivotal in fostering innovation and growth in transport and logistics. In the first half of 2024, 13 joint ventures and 35 cooperative agreements were announced, with about 60% freight-related activities.





7.1 Key areas of collaboration

The chief areas are digital technologies, sustainability and infrastructure development. For example, Aramco and DHL Supply Chain have formed Advanced Supply Management Operations (ASMO). This collaboration leverages digital technologies (automation, collaborative robotics, AI, data analytics) to meet the growing demand for sustainable and efficient supply chain services in Saudi Arabia.



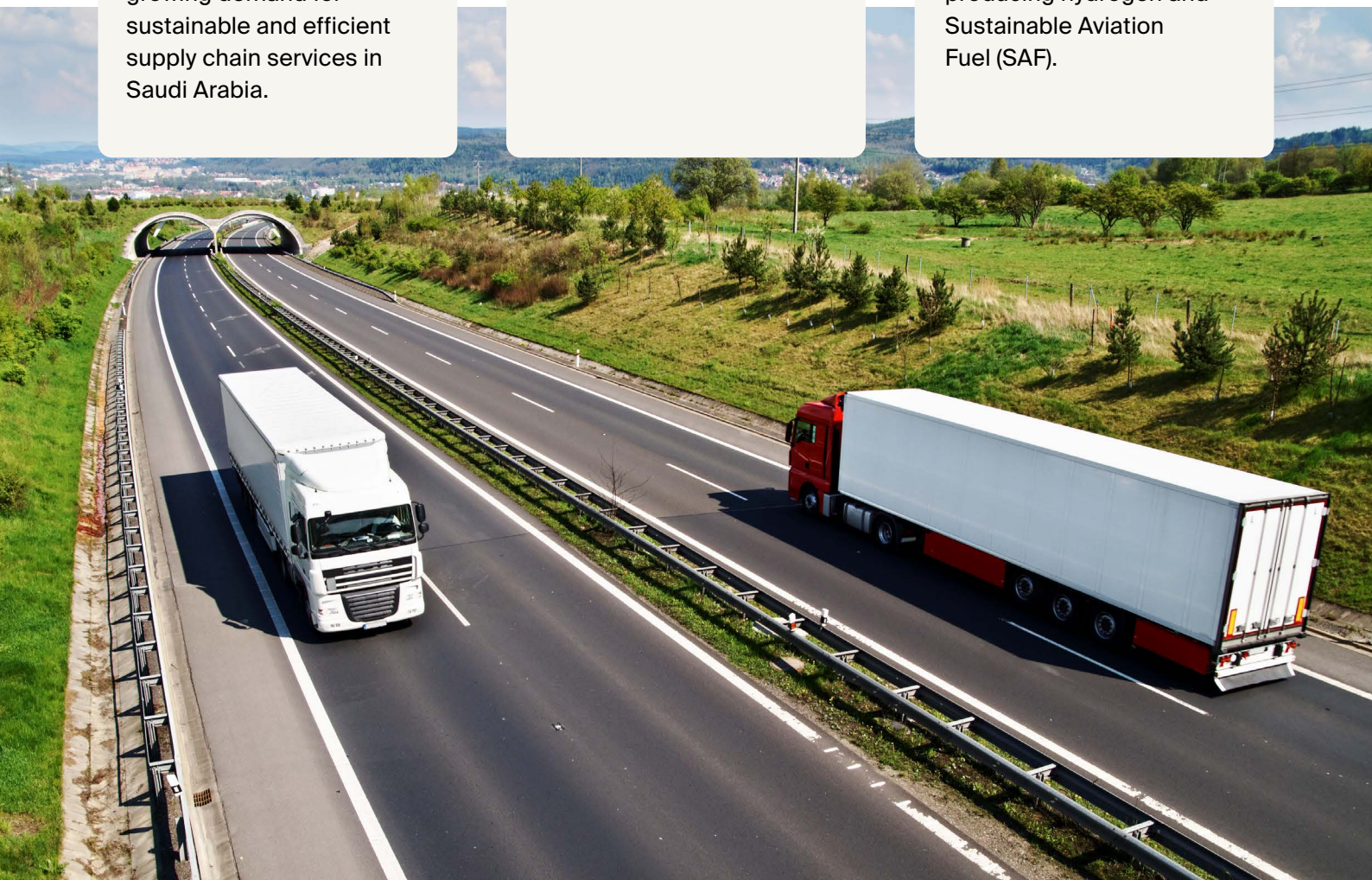
7.2 Regional spotlight

Several JVs are centred in Asia—particularly Malaysia, India, and China—indicating the region's market potential and strategic importance. The focus is primarily on logistics, infrastructure and aviation.



7.3 Sustainability initiatives

Sustainability is the epicentre of strategic alliances, with partnerships shaped to develop eco-friendly technologies and practices. KeyState Energy, CNX Resources Corp., and Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) have announced a partnership to create an integrated facility capable of producing hydrogen and Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).



8

Conclusion



The logistics industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by sustainability, resilience, horizontal collaboration and digitisation. Companies are choosing to invest in sustainable technologies, digital platforms, and strategic partnerships. The trends identified in this report highlight the importance of innovation and adaptability to maintain a competitive edge. As the landscape evolves, organisations that embrace change will be well-positioned for success in the years to come.



About Us

Kuehne+Nagel is one of the world's leading logistics providers, with a network of more than 1,300 offices in over 100 countries. 80,000 employees worldwide are dedicated to providing customers with innovative transport services and logistics solutions. Trusted for our reliable schedules and transit times, we offer end-to-end full logistics solutions with the right combination of sea, road and rail. Local specialists ensure that Kuehne+Nagel delivers according to customer needs and in compliance with all regulations and industry requirements.

Learn more about our services at

→ kuehne-nagel.com