

More than half a billion investment boosts East London Port

[East London, South Africa, 20 October 2017] Several major infrastructure and equipment projects at the Port of East London have seen Transnet pump a collective R542 million into South Africa's only river port in the last few years. The latest project – rehabilitation of the sheet pile wharf adjacent to the dry dock – was completed earlier this month, with labour and material sourced locally.

The R108 million project set out to rehabilitate the 83 metre wharf adjacent to the Princess Elizabeth Dry Dock and Latimer's Landing. With multiple functions including use as a ship repair facility and for berthing small craft, the wharf will support the port's Operation Phakisa ambitions focusing on marine transport and manufacturing.

Construction contractor Haw & Inglis sourced labour and material locally in line with Transnet's supplier development requirements, while preliminary investigations, engineering design and site supervision were undertaken by the East London Aurecon office.

Acting Port Manager, Alvin Singama, said this was one of several projects aimed at refurbishing and modernising the port's infrastructure to sustain existing business and cargo, while simultaneously positioning for future growth.

"The port is gearing up to further enhance its capacity with an expansion of its automotive facilities and the upgrade of maritime engineering offerings in line with Operation Phakisa," said Singama.

Operation Phakisa is a programme introduced by the South African government to unlock the economic potential of the country's oceans. In East London it includes refurbishment of the dry dock at a total cost of R219 million to support ship repair and marine manufacturing. The total dry dock refurbishment project is expected to be completed in 2021, with new switchgear and crane rails already completed. The initiative to establish a boat building cluster at the port has however been negatively impacted by the worldwide economic slowdown.

"Nevertheless, there is still potential to grow volumes and expand business in the port, which will have a positive socio-economic impact on the city," said Singama.

Other investments already completed at the port earlier this year include the R176 million West Bank Foreshore protection project. This entailed the construction of a revetment to protect the port's foreshore and rail infrastructure from erosion and damage caused by rough seas and wave action.

The port's tanker berth fire protection system is also being upgraded, while port security has seen an investment of R92m to date, with further investments on surveillance equipment underway.

The port is also replacing its rail network and refurbishing the Buffalo Bridge.

Deepening and widening of the port's entrance channel is still in pre-feasibility stage, with TNPA exploring various designs and layouts based on modelling and completed simulations of vessel manoeuvring.

Feasibility studies for the Latimer's Landing jetty project have been completed and are awaiting finalisation of approval by the Eastern Cape Heritage Resource Agency.

"We are proud to be making progress with several ongoing investments that demonstrate our commitment to the local business community, despite a challenging economic environment. The Port of East London continues to actively explore new markets to broaden its customer base and to diversify its cargo throughputs," said Singama.

Ends

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Below left: The Sheet Pile Wharf during construction in the Port of East London.



Below: The West Bank Foreshore Protection project included a rock revetment to protect the port's foreshore and rail infrastructure from erosion and damage caused by rough seas and wave action.



Below: A phased approach is followed with the upgrading of the dry dock in the Port of East London.



About Transnet National Ports Authority

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of five operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005). For more information visit www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net.

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