

Western Cape targets 40,000 more containers with logistics upgrades

Improving the Western Cape's logistics system will be essential if the province is to achieve its export ambitions and create thousands of new jobs, according to Ilse van Schalkwyk, Deputy Director-General in the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

Speaking to Exporters Western Cape members at The Rockefeller Hotel in Cape Town on 5 August, Van Schalkwyk outlined the province's recently launched export strategy and the first phase of its developing maritime logistics strategy.

The Western Cape aims to grow its economy by between 4% and 6% by 2035, triple exports, including tourism, and bring 1 000 new exporters into the economy. The province also aims to diversify beyond its dependence on primary agricultural products by increasing manufactured and other value-added exports.



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"Nobody needs to do us a favour. We need to be competitive," she said. "That last decision by a buyer often comes down to price, but competitiveness is what allows you to go toe-to-toe in global markets."

Logistics capacity will need to keep pace with private-sector investment and rising production. Van Schalkwyk said Port of Cape Town cargo could grow by about 4% a year, representing roughly 40 000 additional containers and supporting around 5 000 new jobs annually.

The maritime logistics strategy looks beyond the Port of Cape Town to the Western Region's three commercial ports: Cape Town, Saldanha Bay, and Mossel Bay. Cape Town's roles include multi-cargo handling, a specialist cold port, cruise activity, and ship repair. Saldanha Bay offers deep-water bulk capacity, energy-storage opportunities, and potential for large-scale ship repair, while Mossel Bay has opportunities in liquid fuels and cruise tourism.

"You cannot focus only on the Port of Cape Town. You have to look at the system," Van Schalkwyk said.

The strategy identifies four enablers: better integration across the logistics ecosystem, including road and rail cargo handovers; digital platforms such as a port community system and predictive analytics; balancing port performance and cargo flows; and strengthening resilience during disruptions.

Van Schalkwyk also welcomed Transnet's move to seek a partner to design, finance, and operate Berths B-D at the Port of Cape Town under a 25-year concession.

Exporters Western Cape chairman Terry Gale said efficient logistics had become inseparable from export growth. "Our exporters are ready to grow, invest and enter new markets, but the logistics system must be able to support that ambition."

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