

Richards Bay gets R140 million general bulk ship-loader

A R140 million general bulk ship-loader procured for the Port of Richards Bay is the latest addition in Transnet Port Terminal's (TPT) R33 billion Market Demand Strategy (MDS) investment programme. The loader replaces an out-of-date Krupp machine.

Custom-built to complement the terminal's operational envelope, the loader was designed in Austria and built in China; however South African engineering company Sandvik has managed its entire procurement.

Its capacity is a guaranteed 2500 tons per hour (tph) at a bulk density of 1.9 tons per cubic metre (t/m³). The linear travelling loader will be suitable for all export commodities the terminal handles, including coal, magnetite, chrome and chloride.

According to terminal manager Victor Mkhize: "This arriving ship-loader is a replacement of the less-suited, 35-year-old Krupp machine that has now exceeded its design life."

He added that the loader not only boasted better outreach and a higher draft to accommodate much larger vessels, it had also been designed to be environmentally friendly with its built-in dust-collection system and three dust-free loading chutes.

Unlocking demand and creating world-class port operations

Just over 70% of the terminal's total commercial trade is export. The addition of equipment is aimed at the MDS' promise of facilitating unconstrained growth, unlocking demand and creating world-class port operations through improved efficiencies.

TPT's chief executive, Karl Socikwa, said: "TPT will, in the next seven years, invest in infrastructure, maintenance and expansion, drive growth and increase our footprint in Africa offering improved connectivity to existing and new markets."

Socikwa said there were several projects currently underway across all terminals to ensure that equipment woes would no longer hinder operational targets.

A skills transfer opportunity has also been created through Sandvik where TPT operators and the technical team will be trained for sustainable operations. The pre-assembled loader will be offloaded and installed upon arrival to undergo commissioning.

The machine is scheduled to be fully operational in April 2013.

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