



Grindrod commits R560m to expansion at Maputo

Lines want more gantries

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THE PORT of Maputo is going through a thriving development phase, with plans for expansion of the harbour's terminals, the quayside handling facilities and the shipping frequency.

By far the major player of the moment is the shipping and logistics company, Grindrod, with over R560-million in the coffers for developing various port interests over the next three years.

According to information released to FTW, Grindrod is planning substantial capacity increases in the coal and car terminals.

By the end of this year, expansion of the Maputo coal terminal – in which Grindrod has a 95% shareholding – will give it a 3-million tons-per-year capacity, and a longer term planned capacity of 6-mt, according to Grindrod executive director, Dave Rennie.

The vehicle terminal – which will initially be equipped to handle 63 000 vehicles-per-year – will have room for future expansion to 250 000 units annually, he added.

Grindrod is also looking at establishing a bulk liquid terminal in the port, designed to service the growing demand for chemical and vegetable oils in the Mozambican market – but, in time, to also service the Gauteng market.

Rennie also told FTW that the ferro-chrome terminal had also just been extended by 25 000m² to achieve an annual handling capacity of 1.3-mt.

In another development, SA's Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and a consortium of private equity partners has started building a new state-of-the-art fresh produce terminal at the port.

This R30-m project is destined to provide farmers in the agricultural areas inland of the port with a viable alternative to Durban as their export gateway.

Jan Bekker, the business development manager of port operators MIPS – now owned by Dubai Ports – also told FTW that his company had extensive plans for expansion and future development.

But, beyond stating that these would involve both quayside container handling equipment and terminal warehousing, he could release no detail at this stage.

"We have submitted our plans to our parent company," he said, "but nothing has, as yet, been finalised."

The hope, as far as container shipping line Mitsui OSK Line (MOL) is concerned, according to marketing manager Iain McIntosh, is for expansion of the quayside handling facilities.

"They've got the second gantry crane up-and-running again after it was out of commission for about three months," he said. "But our major hope is that further gantry cranes will be acquired."

It will only take a bit of ship schedule reshuffling, he added, and MOL will be able to offer a regular weekly call at Maputo. "We are currently averaging between three-and-four calls a month."

CMA CGM also has its eyes on the potential at the port.

According to Pam Yerushalmy, GM of CMA CGM Shipping Agency, the line had regular calls at Maputo before a major re-jig of its services cut them out of its schedule.

"But," she said, "it's a port where growth is to be expected, and we haven't written off calling there again in the future."