

Motor industry casts keen eye on Maputo alternative

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IT IS all eyes to the planning boards in the SA motor industry as the Grindrod group starts actively marketing the Maputo Car Terminal (MCT) as an alternative export/import gateway to the already under-strain Durban terminal.

The cherry on the top is the announcement by Höegh Autoliners that it will be making regular, scheduled calls with its car carriers at Maputo on a 6-month trial basis from September.

The SA motor industry in general is casting a keen eye on the progress at Mozambique's capital city port, and, according to Nico Vermeulen, director of the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of SA (Naamsa), there are forces that are driving research into an alternative gateway for SA motor vehicle imports and exports.

"There is a lot of congestion at Durban harbour," he told FTW. "And the comparison of time and distance in moving product between the two ports

and Gauteng strongly favours Maputo.

"The industry has been monitoring the progress at MCT and is aware of these advantages. It also welcomes more competition in the logistics chain."

MCT GM, Pieter Venter, also told FTW that individual car companies had been talking to Grindrod.

"We have had discussions with three different OEMs (original equipment manufacturers)," he said, with interest in the car



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terminal "growing".

The alternative has already been tried out, according to Brenda Horne, CEO of Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI), with a test

run in December by major manufacturer, Nissan.

"This proved that the corridor was a cost-efficient option for the SA car industry," she told FTW.