

# Ports review seeks to remove blocks, lower costs

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The Department of Transport (DoT) has commissioned a study to investigate the performance of SA's network of ports to understand the challenges ports face and which keep the costs of doing business in the country higher than they should be, Transport Minister Ben Martins said on Wednesday.



(Image: GCIS)

The objective of the study is to evaluate the relative efficiency of the ports and to be "able to unblock obstacles and form a strategy to enable us to reduce the cost of doing business and reduce turnaround times at our ports", Martins said in a speech at the inaugural South African Maritime Safety Authority (Samsa) conference in Cape Town.

There were "a number of studies that point to the fact we could have greater efficiencies at our ports and as a result ... there would be greater economic returns for our economy", Martins said.

"We have to put measures in place to turn our ports around and make them ports of choice," he said.

A draft policy for the development of the maritime sector had been created by the Department of Transport and would soon be presented to the Cabinet for "refinement" and debate, he said.

The department had done "comprehensive studies on key sectors" within the maritime sector, which included coastal shipping, oil and gas services, ship repairs, green ship recycling, trans-shipment hubs with special economic zones, crewing and logistics and planning, he said.

Just within the oil and gas sector there were many opportunities, Martins said. Off the west coast of Africa there were 250 oil and gas exploration projects being undertaken, all of which would need services and support.

"This activity implies considerable opportunities for oil rig repairs and maintenance, which can take place within SA where there is capacity, mainly at Cape Town and Durban, where we have the facilities," Martins said.

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