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Hill-Lewis wants Port of Cape Town included in private sector participation RFI

3RD MARCH 2025 BY: TERENCE CREAMER - CREAMER MEDIA EDITOR



Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis

Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis has expressed his desire for the Port of Cape Town to be included in an upcoming

national government initiative to test the appetite of private companies to invest in South Africa's port and rail networks, which have hitherto been dominated by Transnet.

Transport Minister **Barbara Creecy** confirmed recently that her department would be issuing requests for information (RFIs) regarding potential private sector participation (PSP) investments in both sectors.

“This serves to share information with the public regarding possible PSP projects, but also to allow the department, and by extension Transnet, to gather information on projects with the potential for third-party involvement,” Creecy said in an address made at a World Bank event on February 28.

The Minister announced that PSP investments formed part of a broader strategy to lift yearly freight volumes to 250-million tons by 2030, as well as to address inefficiencies in the country’s ports.

She also said a PSP unit was being established in collaboration with the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Also underlined, however, was the recovery programme under way by Transnet at the ports, which included investments into new cranes and straddle carriers

Hill-Lewis said he was encouraged by the RFI process, but argued that PSP investments into the Port of Cape Town were long overdue, given its poor international ranking.

“The RFI needs to be designed to encourage private sector proposals to co-run Cape Town’s port and enable major infrastructure investment,” he said in a statement.

The mayor lamented what he described as a lack of clarity on government’s plans for the city’s port, and urged the Minister to ensure that the Port of Cape Town was indeed included in the RFI process.

“We need a clear and urgent deadline for greater private sector involvement in Cape Town’s port operations, and we will be watching this RFI process closely,” Hill-Lewis said. 

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