

Govt backs citrus exports with R51br Transnet guarantee

The South African citrus industry has welcomed the government's recent approval of a R51bn guarantee facility for Transnet, viewing it as a vital step to support the logistics giant's recovery and improve export capabilities ahead of the 2025 citrus season peak.



Source: cocoparisienne via [Pixabay](#)

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) highlighted that the guarantee comes alongside encouraging developments in Public Sector Partnerships (PSPs), which are seen as essential to reshaping South Africa's logistics infrastructure.

According to Transnet, a critical part of their recovery strategy is "strong collaboration with customer and industry partners," a sentiment echoed by the CGA, which said that export growth depends on effective cooperation between Transnet and private sector players.

Peak citrus export season preparation

As oranges begin moving to export markets, the CGA appreciates the preparational steps taken by Transnet Port Terminals (TPT), including recruiting 256 additional fixed-term staff, maintaining all refrigerated container plug points, and adding 100 new pieces of equipment.

"There are challenges on the horizon, but if all goes well, Southern Africa is expected to export 17 million 15kg cartons of citrus, according to the latest figures," says Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of t CGA. He adds: "Shifting produce in an efficient and timely way is essential to the profitability of ou industry. The season has started smoothly, but the real test will be the peak over the next two mor

Private sector partnerships key to logistics efficiency

The CGA emphasises that long-term solutions to logistics inefficiencies and costs lie in large-scal Public-Private Sector Partnerships (PSPs) at ports and within the rail network. While recent policy changes are promising, the industry has yet to see tangible benefits from operating PSPs.

"Partnering with business brings faster upgrades, specialised knowledge, a performance-driven culture, and constant innovation, which almost immediately stimulates employment growth," says Ntshabele.

Rail access and Durban terminal PSP projects

On rail transport, Ntshabele highlighted recent progress: "The progress made over the past few months in opening the rail network to private players is encouraging. Urgency on this front, as wel ensuring attractive options for the private sector, will unlock growth opportunities in the citrus sec which currently only moves 10% of its citrus to the ports by rail."

However, the CGA also pointed out that the PSP project, poised to be a game-changer for citrus—upgrading and management of Durban Container Terminal Pier 2—is still "tied up in a court battle

Looking ahead, Ntshabele expressed optimism about the industry's future, saying, "As we look towards the future, and our industry's ability to create 100,000 jobs by 2032, we appreciate Transi commitment to PSPs and we hope the momentum is kept and that more projects are urgently pursued."

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