

Companies and Deals 

Maersk set to boost Cape exports with R1.7bn cold storage hub

Facility signals new momentum in private-sector investment in SA's logistics sector.

By Liesl Peyper · 29 Oct 2025 ⌚ 04:04

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Maersk's Belcon Cold Store facility in Cape Town 'directly addresses a critical gap in the market'. Image: Supplied

Global logistics group Maersk officially opened its new Belcon Cold Store facility in Cape Town on Tuesday, marking a R1.72 billion investment in South Africa's cold chain logistics network.

The facility adds 32 000 pallet positions of temperature-controlled storage capacity and includes an on-site container depot for efficient cargo handling.

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The Belcon Cold Store is the second major logistics development in Cape Town this month, following Grindrod's recent opening of a new container depot in Salt River.

Together, the two projects signal renewed private-sector investment aimed at improving freight resilience and export efficiency.



Western Cape Minister of Mobility Isaac Sileku (left) and Maersk Southern Africa & Islands MD Lubabalo Mtya. Image: Supplied

Addressing bottlenecks

The new facility comes amid mounting losses from delays and cold-chain breaks in South Africa's perishable exports sector.

Logistics inefficiencies in the grape industry alone have been estimated to cost exporters up to R1.5 billion annually.

"There was a clear need to strengthen South Africa's cold chain infrastructure to minimise these losses and support the competitiveness of local exporters," says Lubabalo Mtya, MD: Maersk Southern Africa & Islands, adding that the Belcon Cold Store directly addresses this critical gap in the market.

Maersk's South African cold-storage network now comprises three sites – Belcon in Cape Town, and the Cato and PreCool facilities near Durban.

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The network is integrated with Maersk's ocean fleet of nearly 700 vessels serving 130 countries, connecting producers to end markets with what the company describes as "unbroken cold chain" coverage.

Mtya says the Belcon project created over 700 temporary jobs during construction and has established 55 permanent positions for cold-store operators, logistics coordinators, technicians and administrative staff.

'Military precision' for citrus exports

Richard Morgan, Maersk's regional MD for India, the Middle East and Africa, says the facility has already proved its worth – during the peak citrus export season earlier this year.

"During the peak three weeks of the citrus season in August, our team worked around the clock, coordinating inbound trucking from farms, managing inventory with real-time temperature monitoring and synchronising outbound loads to vessel schedules with military precision."

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Morgan says next up for the Belcon site is supporting the Western Cape's table-grape industry as its season begins in November.

In his address at the opening, Western Cape Mobility Minister Isaac Sileku said Belcon is central to the province's Overberg Rail Business Case Pilot, which reconnects the agricultural region of Caledon directly with the Belcon terminal and the Port of Cape Town.

"Belcon has already doubled its freight volume to the Port of Cape Town," Sileku added.

"And with Maersk and other private operators expanding here, those numbers will keep climbing."

Grindrod expands in Walvis Bay

Meanwhile, Grindrod Limited has strengthened its presence on Africa's west coast with the opening of a new 4 000m² warehouse at the Port of Walvis Bay, Namibia. The facility, built on the company's existing 50 000m² site near berths 7 and 8, supports conveyor-based cargo

movement and is compatible with rail and road transport networks.

Frans Visser, operations executive for Grindrod Logistics Africa, describes Walvis Bay as “ideally situated” as a gateway to global markets, especially for cargo originating from the West Coast of Africa and neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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