

SA CONTAINER TERMINALS



Cape Town Harbour

troubling performance

Optimal container terminal performance is critical to the viability of the fresh fruit industry of SA. By Mitchell Brooke



Mitchell Brooke

The World Bank Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) for 2023 ranked the container terminals of SA amongst the worst performing in the world, from 405 ports. The CPPI provides an indicative measure of container port performance, using available empirical objective data that focuses exclusively on the length of time that a vessel stays in a port. Vision 260 highlights the urgent need for ramped up container terminal performance in SA, which is further warranted by related statistics in the report (see **Table 1**). Some have sought to discredit the contents of the CPPI and its applied

methodology. However, the performance falls undeniably short of the standard. According to the report, the global average Gross Crane Moves per Hour (GCH) is 23,6. This translates to an average of 566 container moves per crane over 24 hours. The terminal performance of SA is typically less than 15 GCH, which has been the case for a number of years. **Table 2** shows the daily moves per terminal from 18–31 July. A target GCH of

Table 1: Excerpt of the Container Port Performance Index 2023

PORT NAME	RANK PER SHIP SIZE RANGE									
	RANK	INDEX POINTS	TOTAL CALLS	<1,500	1,501-5,000	5,001-8,500	8,501-13,500	>13,500	2022	CHANGE
TRIESTE	394	(210.60)	380	192	233	128	183	109	342	-52
POINTE-NOIRE	395	(216.26)	489	304	352	219	181		315	-80
OAKLAND	396	(221.87)	595	254	248	190	172	111	345	-51
PRINCE RUPERT	397	(225.43)	117		327	180	147	114	344	-53
SAVANNAH	398	(231.20)	1,305	255	288	184	174	112	350	-48
DURBAN	399	(278.01)	499	299	366	226	177		343	-56
RIJEKA	400	(302.92)	214	268	287	216	165	115	336	-64
COTONOU	401	(325.70)	313	327	355	223	182		332	-69
TACOMA	402	(330.92)	121			224	176	113	327	-75
MERSIN	403	(354.42)	673	324	368	196	141	116	132	-271
NGOURA	404	(573.28)	252		332	210	179	117	340	-64
CAPE TOWN	405	(716.62)	196		373	227	186		347	-58

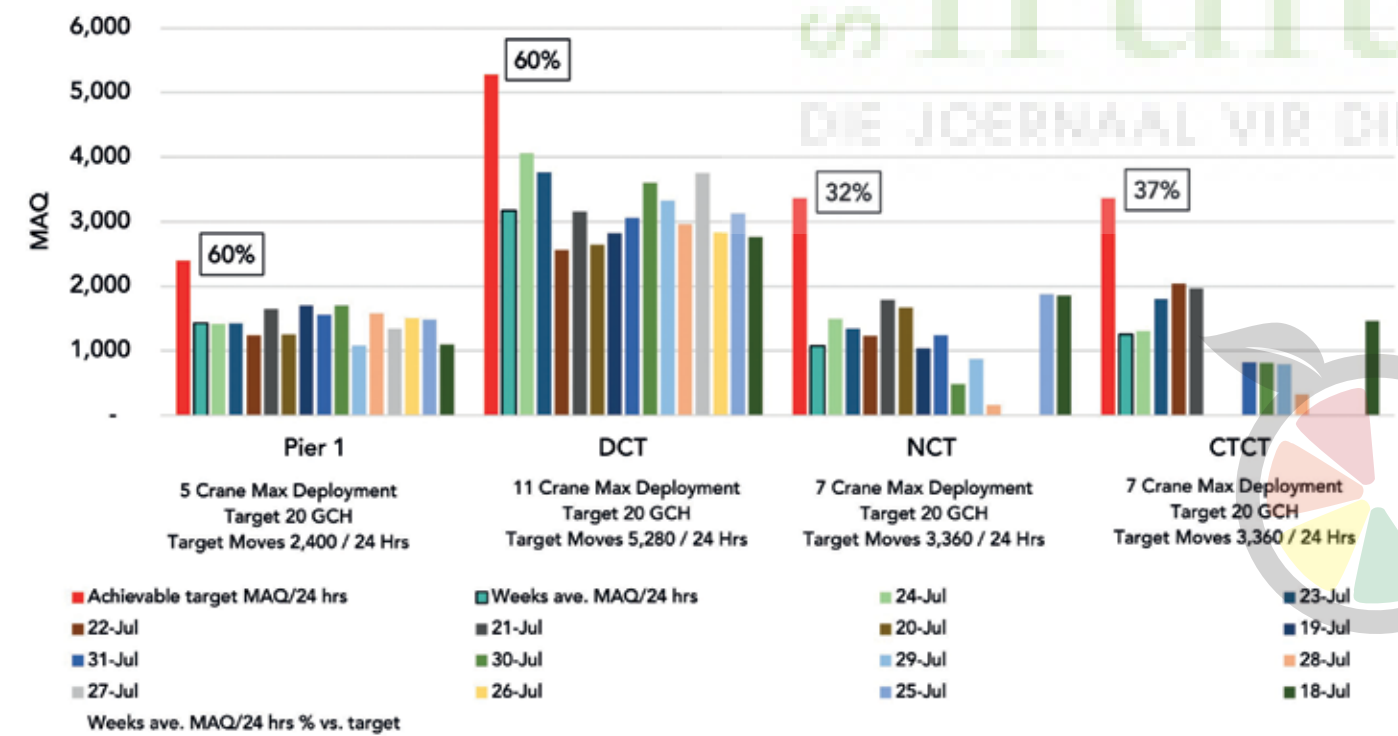
Source: Original table produced for this publication, based on CPPI 2023 data.

Table 2: Terminal MAQ (moves across quay) stats 2024

Terminal		Pier 1	DCT	NCT	CTCT
Max cranes deployed		5	11	7	7
Standard GCH target per crane		20	20	20	20
Weeks av. MAQ/24 hrs % vs. target		60%	60%	32%	37%
Achievable target MAQ/24 hrs		2,400	5,280	3,360	3,360
Weeks av. MAQ/24 hrs		1,432	3,174	1,074	1,257
	31-Jul	1,560	3,060	1,243	819
	30-Jul	1,706	3,601	487	810
	29-Jul	1,085	3,328	869	794
	28-Jul	1,576	2,962	157	324
	27-Jul	1,339	3,756	-	NA
	26-Jul	1,505	2,835	-	NA
	25-Jul	1,485	3,134	1,873	NA
	24-Jul	1,418	4,060	1,496	1,303
	23-Jul	1,420	3,759	1,339	1,801
	22-Jul	1,245	2,559	1,232	2,040
	21-Jul	1,651	3,155	1,783	1,964
	20-Jul	1,255	2,645	1,667	NA
	19-Jul	1,705	2,823	1,035	NA
	18-Jul	1,101	2,759	1,859	1,461

20 moves per hour was used to determine how many moves should be achievable per day at each terminal, based on maximum crane density. Over the period under review, Pier 1 and the Durban Container Terminal (DCT) achieved 60% of the achievable target, while Ngqura (outside Gqeberha) achieved 32% and Cape Town 37%. Granted, over this period Ngqura and Cape Town were affected by wind and ranging disruptions that impacted operations. However, on the days when the terminals did operate with a full complement of cranes and no disruptions, neither achieved an acceptable rate of performance. Terminal equipment and machinery are a highly probable cause of poor port performance. In the case of both Cape Town and Ngqura, terminal equipment and machinery allocation mostly match the requirements of the terminal. In the case of Pier 1 and DCT, the opposite applies yet they achieved 60% of the targeted daily container move count. This begs the

Durban Harbour



SA container terminal waterside MAQ - week 31/32

question: Are there prevailing underlying issues preventing an upward trend across South African container terminal performance? An interesting note contained in the World Bank CPPI report is that Maputo Port is positioned well up the index. Interestingly, to load and discharge from vessels, DP World Maputo utilises mobile harbour cranes that are significantly slower than the ship to shore cranes used in SA.

Many are eagerly awaiting the container terminal operator, International Container Terminal Services (ICTSI), to be given the go-ahead to operate DCT in partnership with Transnet Port Terminals. The implementation of the partnership has been delayed due to an interdict against the tender that was awarded to ICTSI. Prompt resolution will allow for an assessment of the impact of partnering

with a private operator, on terminal performance. And the outcome will determine the way forward regarding the viability of such partnerships.



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