

Transnet to train 6 800 port staff

 By [Paddy Hartdegen](#)

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At least 6 800 people will be trained by Transnet's ports division over the next five years in an attempt to resolve the huge shortage of skills facing this sector of the economy according to Brian Molefe, chief executive of the company.



He told the Public Enterprise Committee earlier this year that about R88-million will be spent on training ports personnel and will recruit about 1 000 apprentices a year. These apprentices would be used in the ports division and the rail-engineering sector.

Transnet is investing heavily in improving South Africa's ports, and in Cape Town a five-year project to double the Cape Town Container Terminal's capacity is already underway. The project will cost R5,4-billion and will see its capacity doubling so that it can handle 1,4-million TEUs a year.

Efficiency improvements are key for this development and Transnet Port Terminals chief executive Karl Socikwa says that from a customer perspective, the rate at which containers are moved through the Cape Town terminal has already improved by more than 30% as a result of higher efficiency levels.

Moreover, the private maritime industry is also trying to boost training levels. For instance in May 2008 the Southern African Shipyards launched a programme to provide training in boilermaking, welding, fitting, rigging and the electrical trades and it now claims to have the largest artisan training programme in the shipbuilding industry in the country.

In terms of this programme apprentices undergo trade tests run by the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority and so far, 40 apprentices have qualified.

SA Shipyards is providing its own in-service training to students doing non-technical courses as part of its own skills development initiative.

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ABOUT PADDY HARTDEGEN

Paddy Hartdegen has been working as a journalist and writer for the past 40 years since his first article was published in the *Sunday Tribune* when he was just 16-years-old. He has written 13 books, edited a plethora of business-to-business publications and written for most of the major newspapers in South Africa.

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