

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

Commercial ports play a crucial role in South Africa's transport system and its economic development, and are therefore treated as strategic entities by this policy. Combined with the strategic geographical position of South Africa's coastline, the port system can have a multiplier role on the economy of the country and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. From a strategic perspective, the pursuit of this policy is to ensure an internationally competitive port system. Efficient ports are known to be catalysts for increased trade, and thus provide a comparative advantage for international trade.

The White Paper on National Transport policy mainly deals with commercial ports from a transport perspective. The impact of port extends far beyond their contribution to transport costs. The strategic goals of this national policy on ports will reflect not only the transport perspective, but also the industrial (trade and manufacturing) and the market (consumers and suppliers) and the national political system.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure affordable, internationally competitive, efficient and safe port services based on the application of commercial rules in a transparent and competitive environment applied consistently across the transport system.

The financial burden for port infrastructure should be shifted from the general taxpayer to the port user. There should be an increase in infrastructure investment and service delivery level where appropriate, based on user needs. The government's commitment to safe transportation should express the need for a clean environment and service designated areas. The government must maintain its commitment towards meeting all constitutional obligations as well as facilitating the expansion of international trade, tourism in general and export activity in particular.

Today, globalisation pressures make it essential that nations integrate their transport systems into the global logistics network. Ports are naturally being incorporated into this changing system and have to adjust to the new challenges and environment. Government recognizes the strategic value of the commercial ports system in South Africa, in the context of international trade initiatives and the changing global transport environment. It is for this reason that it needs to devise this policy in support of the efforts to improve the functioning of commercial ports.