

Cargo movement update¹

Date: 15 September 2023

Weekly Snapshot

Table 1 – Port volumes and air cargo flows, week on week

Flows	Current ²			Previous ³			Growth
	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	
Port Volumes (containers)	22 476	21 633	44 109	24 339	27 713	52 052	↓15%
Air Cargo (tons)	3 287	1 909	5 195	3 090	2 010	5 101	↑2%

Monthly Snapshot

Figure 1 – Monthly⁴ cargo volume levels, year on year (100% = baseline; >100% = growth)

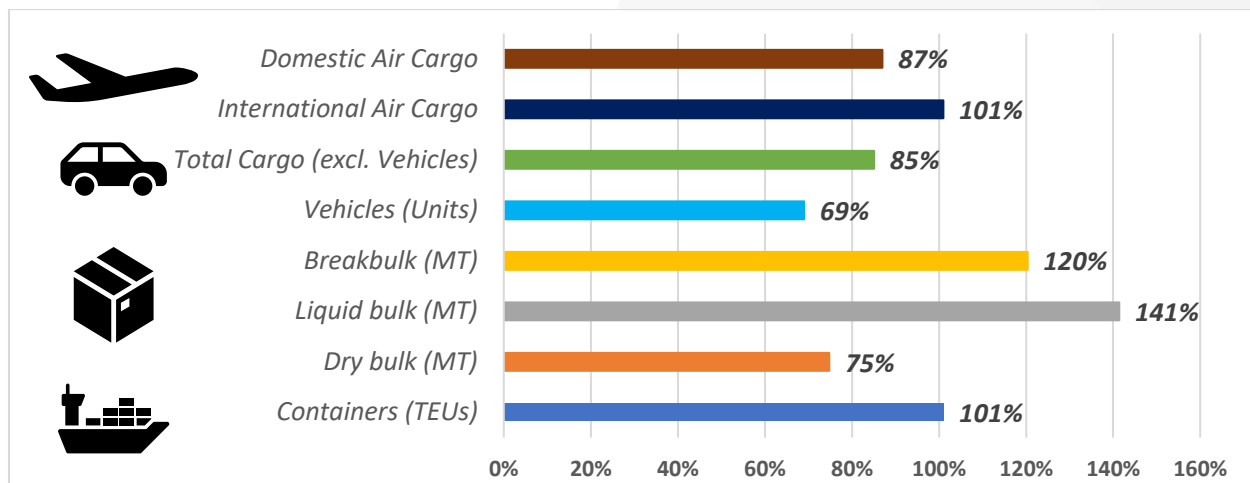
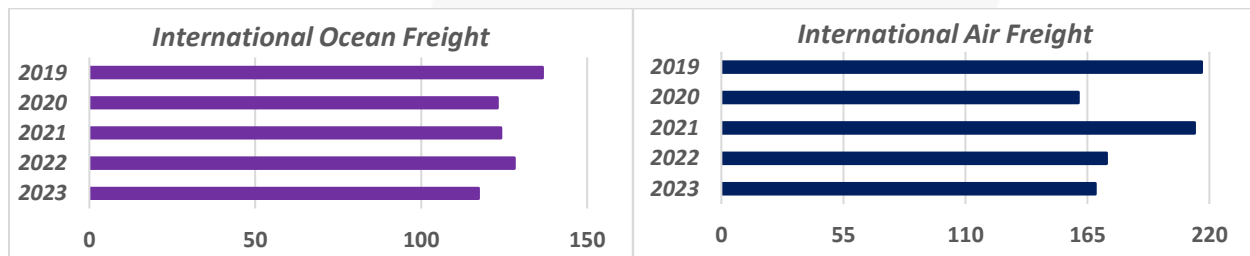


Figure 2 – Global year-to-date flows 2019-2023⁵: ocean, y/y (metric tonnes) & air freight, y/y (kg millions)



Key Notes

- An average of **~6 301 containers** was handled per day, with **~8 129 containers** projected for next week.
- Rail cargo handled out of Durban amounted to **2 302 containers** per day, **↓3%** compared to last week.
- Cross-border queue times were **unchanged from last week**, with transit times **↑1,3 hours (w/w)**; SA borders increased by **~80 minutes**, averaging **~11,4 hours (↑12%)**; Other SADC borders averaged **~9,4 hours (↑16%)**.
- Maersk's capacity is **↓3%** less than in 2022, as Zim (**↑33%**) and MSC (**↑24%**) have grown considerably.
- Global freight rates decreased by **↓7,1% (or \$119)** to **\$1 561** per 40-ft container – YTD now at **~\$1 763**.
- Global air cargo is unchanged from last week, as capacity is slightly down **↓1%** since early August.

¹ This update contains a combined overview of air, sea, and road freight to and from South Africa in the last week. This report is the 154th update.

² 'Current' means the last 7 days' (a week's) worth of available data.

³ 'Previous' means the preceding 8-14 days' (a week's) worth of available data.

⁴ 'Monthly' means the last months' worth of available data compared to the same month in the previous year; Ocean: July vs July. Air: Aug vs Aug.

⁵ For ocean, total Jan-Jul cargo in metric tonnes, as reported by [Transnet](http://www.transnet.co.za) is used, while for air, Jan-Aug cargo to and from ORTIA is used.

Executive Summary

This update – *the 154th of its kind* – contains a consolidated overview of the South African supply chain and the current state of international trade. Commercial ports handled a new record low average of **6 301 containers** per day – significantly down versus an already desperately low **7 184** last week. Port operations were characterised by inclement weather conditions, frequent equipment breakdowns and shortages, employee engagements, and congestion. Despite the adverse weather and poor operational performance at the Port of Cape Town, they still found time to facilitate labour engagements, ensuring that at least seven operational hours were lost on Wednesday. In the 24 hours between Wednesday and Thursday, both Pier 1 and Pier 2 experienced operational delays of up to ~13 hours due to strong winds. The Ports of PE and Ngqura are sharing marine resources once more as one of the tugs at NCT went out of commission this week. One of the main reasons for the increased number of ConCor units on hand in Durban this week can be attributed to challenges such as cable theft, vandalism, and overhead power failures on the line over the weekend. Additionally, TNPA has published an RFI for the design, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed Culemborg Intermodal Logistics Precinct or part thereof and related facilities in Cape Town⁶. This proposed approach has been supported by port users for many years, not necessarily in an identical format, but it is good to see something happening at last.

In the global maritime industry, container throughput figures for the top 30 ports show Shanghai maintains its position as the top container port, with Singapore and Ningbo-Zhoushan following in second and third place. However, six European and American ports within the top 30 experienced a decline in throughput due to economic contraction. Carriers face challenges in managing supply, leading to decreased capacity utilisation, particularly on the US East Coast and the Mediterranean. Rates on these routes have fallen sharply. While increased blanked sailings out of China for October, no permanent service withdrawals have been announced, and idled tonnage remains low. The delayed entry of new, large ships has not slowed supply growth. Port congestion remains limited to certain areas, primarily on the Chinese southeast coast and South Africa. Other developments include **(1)** dry bulk market optimism, **(2)** Maersk launches an industry-first green methanol ship, **(3)** MSC bids for Hamburg as a 'global hub', and **(4)** G20 unveils plan for IMEC trade corridor.

On the air freight front, international air cargo to and from South Africa increased slightly in the last week (**↑2%**) – led by inbound cargo (**↑6%**). Domestic cargo slightly increased this week (**↑5%**) but remains down on last year's level (**~85%**). Both international (**~80%**) and domestic air cargo (**~63%**) remain way down on pre-pandemic levels. Internationally, global tonnages have held firm in the first full week of September after dropping **↓3%** at the end of August and in the first few days of September, while average rates continue to hover at around the same level they have since mid-July – between **\$2,26** and **\$2,29 per kg**. In other air cargo news, **(1)** Cargolux employees have initiated strikes over salary, and **(2)** DSV bucks the trend and increases charter flights.

In regional cross-border road freight trade, average queue times were **mainly unchanged**, while transit times were nearly **an hour and a half** more compared to last week. The median border crossing times at South African borders increased by **80 minutes**, averaging **~11,4 hours** (**↑12%**, w/w) for the week. In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) increased by approximately **the same magnitude** and averaged **~9,4 hours** (**↑16%**, w/w). On average, several SADC border posts took more than a day to

⁶ TNPA. 13/09/2023. [TNPA issues RFI for Culemborg Intermodal Precinct at the Port of Cape Town.](#)

cross, notably Beitbridge and Kasumbalesa (the worst affected from the Zambian side at nearly two days). Further notable developments included **(1)** "high technology", including Gamma Ray scanners touted for South African borders, and **(2)** Lebombo queues persisting.

In summary, we should again highlight that the uninterrupted functioning of ports is pivotal to flawless logistics operations⁷. Moreover, the recent lack of adequate and functioning equipment has put significant strain on several terminals' – notably the Durban Container Terminal's – ability to function uninterrupted – highlighted by the way below-average throughput numbers which have resulted in several vessels waiting outside at anchorage and resulting in Durban returning to the list of top congested ports globally. Not only is there a critical need to improve operational efficiency at our commercial terminals, but the industry also needs significant investment in port facilities, including maintaining and upgrading essential equipment. To illustrate this, Transnet this week made a desperate plea to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance for "more flexible" procurement laws⁸. And, with ICTSI only beginning their operations in April 2024, the industry cannot afford to wait until then to overturn this disastrous situation. Planned equipment maintenance and upgrade must occur constantly; otherwise, we will continue to handle volumes similar to those of 2009 – a dismal reality for an economy desperately waiting to break the shackles mainly caused by Transnet and Eskom.

⁷ Chasomeris, M. 08/09/2023. [Issues of staff, capacity, and maintenance dog SA ports.](#)

⁸ Paton, C. 13/09/2023. [Transnet begs for relief from preferential procurement rules.](#)

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1. Ports Update

This section provides an overview of the flow of containerised cargo through our commercial ports.

a. Container flow overview

The following tables indicate the container flows reported for the last seven days and projections for the next seven days.

Table 2 – Container Ports – Weekly flow reported for 9 to 15 September⁹

7-day flow forecast (09/09/2023 – 15/09/2023)		
TERMINAL	NO. OF CONTAINERS ¹⁰ TO DISCHARGE (IMPORT)	NO. OF CONTAINERS TO LOAD (EXPORT)
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 1:	3 563	4 338
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 2:	10 492	7 939
CAPE TOWN CONTAINER TERMINAL:	1 929	4 310
NGQURA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	5 737	3 988
GQEBERHA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	755	1 058
TOTAL:	22 476	21 633

Source: Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

Table 3 – Container Ports – Weekly flow predicted for 16 to 22 September

7-day flow forecast (16/09/2023 – 22/09/2023)		
TERMINAL	NO. OF CONTAINERS TO DISCHARGE (IMPORT)	NO. OF CONTAINERS TO LOAD (EXPORT)
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 1:	4 125	5 523
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 2:	11 589	12 778
CAPE TOWN CONTAINER TERMINAL:	5 478	4 990
NGQURA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	4 193	6 847
GQEBERHA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	1 022	355
TOTAL:	26 407	30 493

Source: Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

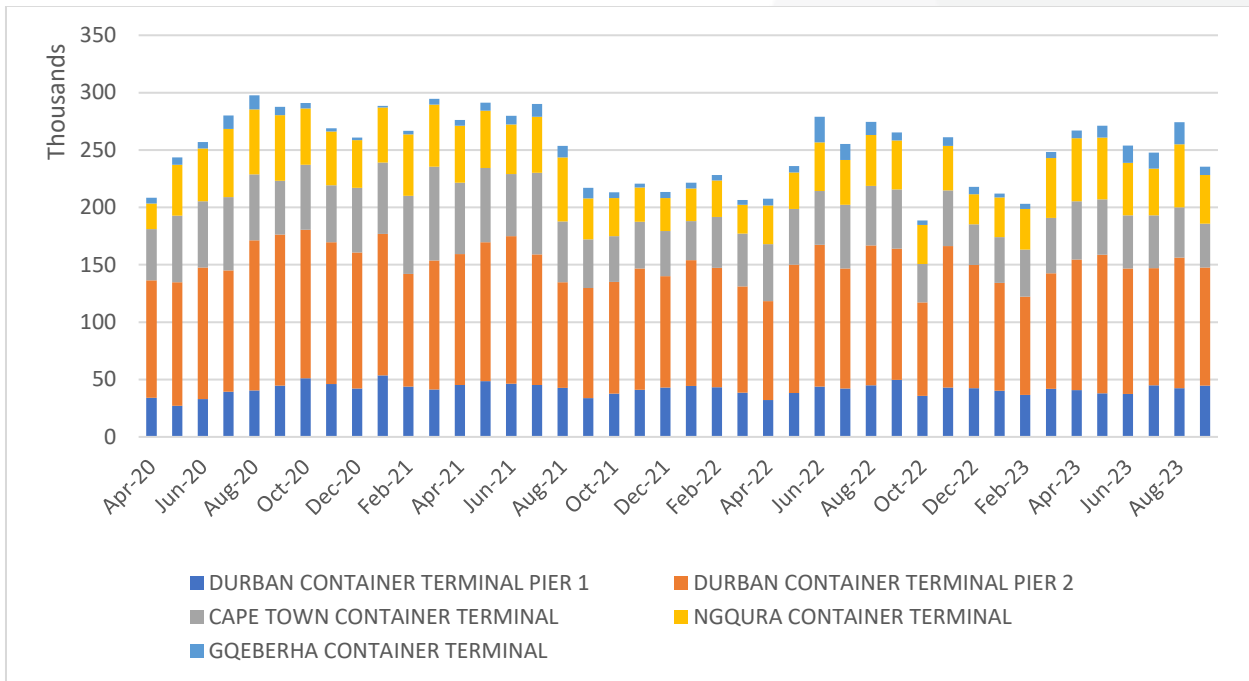
An average of **~6 301 containers** (↓15%) was handled per day for the last week (9 to 15 September, Table 2), compared to the projected average of **~7 326 containers** (↓28% actual versus projected) noted in last week's report. For this week, an increased average of **~8 129 containers** (↑29%) is predicted to be handled (16 to 22 September, Table 3), but as we have often said, there can be very little confidence in these predictions. Port operations were characterised by inclement weather conditions, frequent equipment breakdowns and shortages, employee engagements, and congestion.

The following figure illustrates the rolling *monthly* average flow of aggregate containerised cargo passing through our commercial ports since our records began during the nationwide lockdown.

⁹ It remains important to note that a large percentage (approximately 37% according to the latest year-to-date TNPA figures) of containers is neither imported nor exported, but rather consists of empties and transshipments.

¹⁰ As mentioned before, in previous versions of the report, the measurement was incorrectly indicated as "TEUs", when it should have been noted as containers (20' and 40'). Incidentally, Transnet works on a ratio of approximately 1,4 TEUs per container and this figure will probably increase as the shift towards more 40' containers continues. Incidentally, the US uses 1,5 to 1,8, depending on the port.

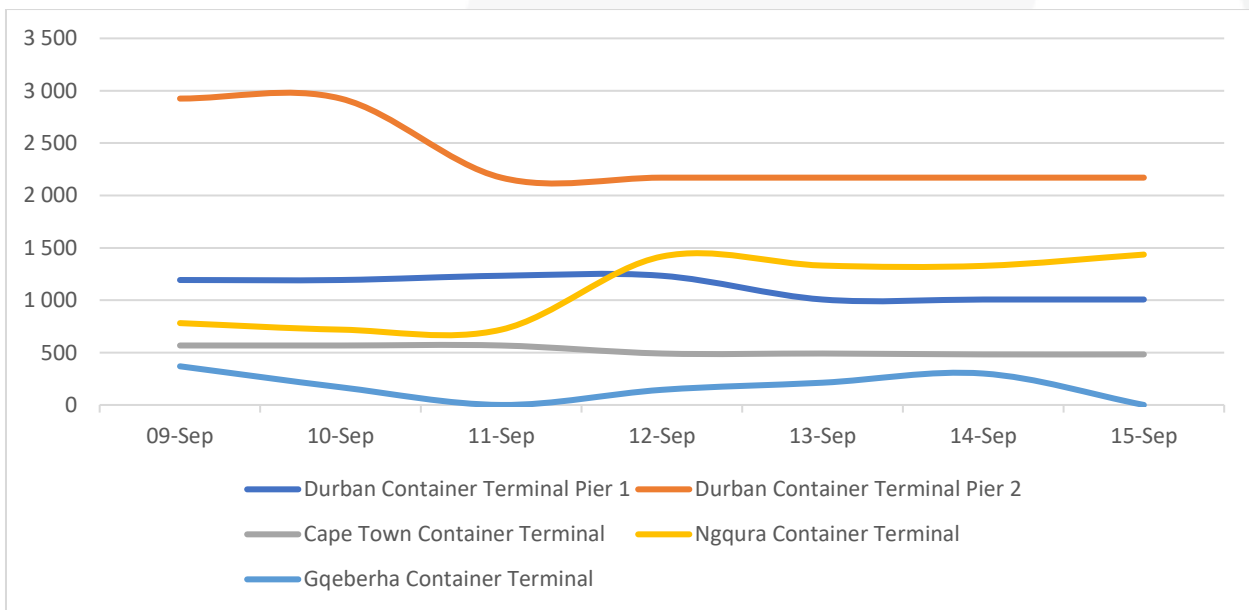
Figure 3 – Monthly flow reported for total cargo movement (containers April 2020 to present, m/m)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

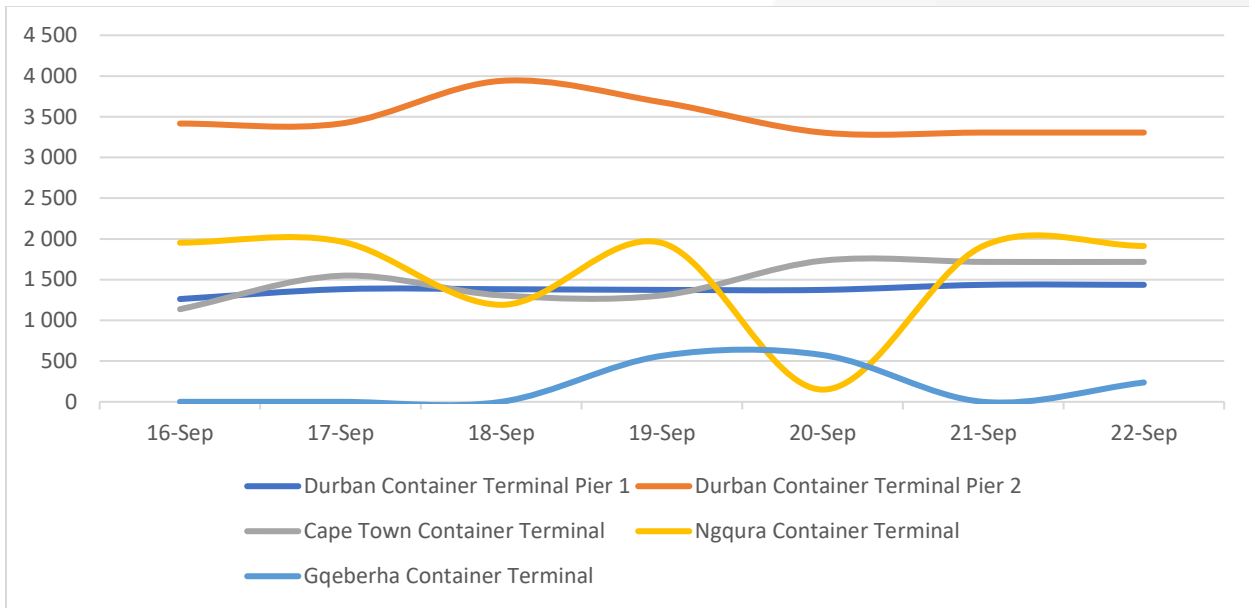
The following figures show the weekly container flows for the last seven days, followed by the projections for the seven days after that.

Figure 4 – 7-day flow reported for total container movements (9 to 15 September; per port; day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

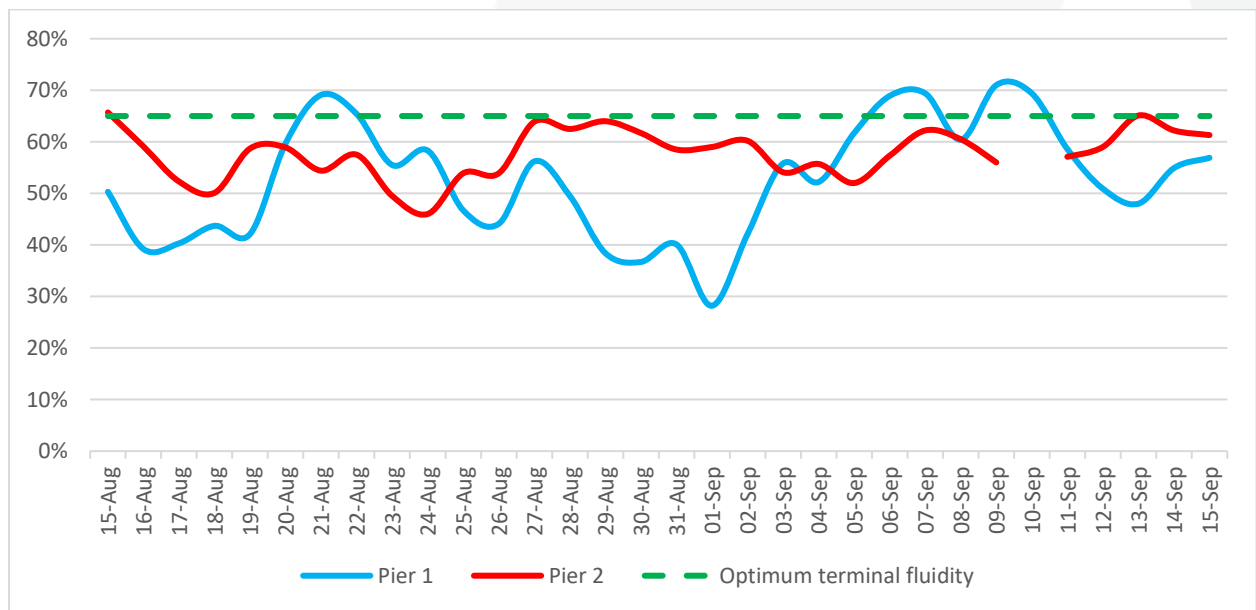
Figure 5 – 7-day forecast reported for total container movements (16 to 22 September; per port; day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

The following figure shows daily stack occupancy in both Durban terminals over the last five weeks.

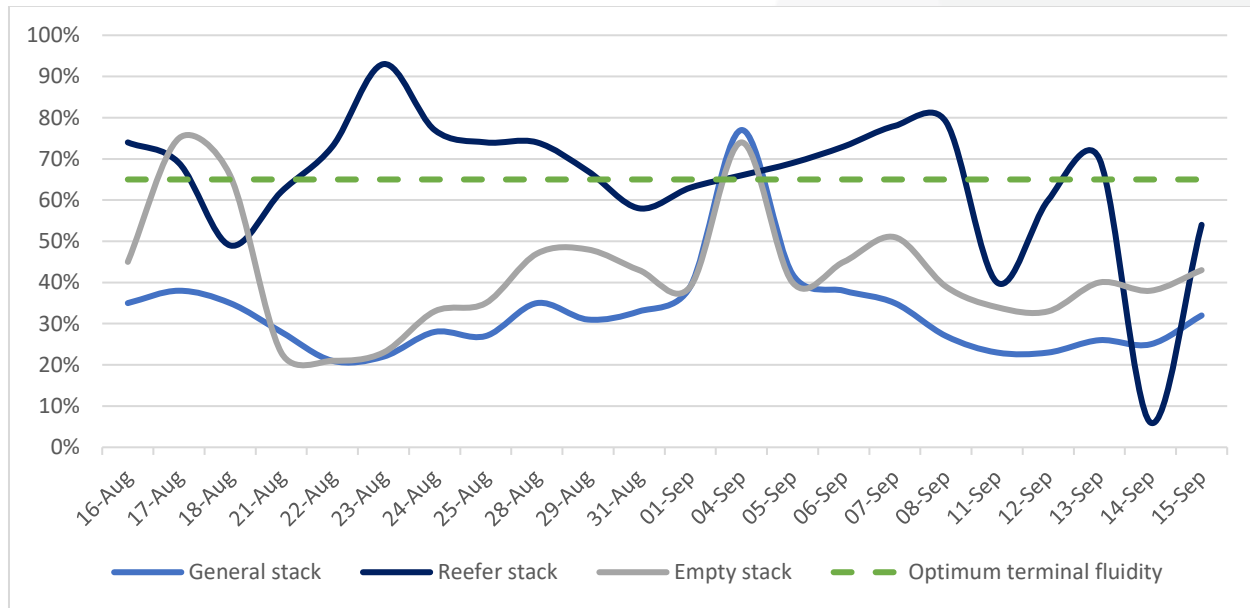
Figure 6 – Stack occupancy in DCT, general-purpose containers (15 August to present; day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

The following figure shows daily stack occupancy in Cape Town over a similar period.

Figure 7 – Stack occupancy in CTCT, GP, reefer, and empty stack (15 August to present, day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 15/09/2023.

b. Summary of port operations

The following sections provide a more detailed picture of the operational performance of our commercial ports over the last seven days.

i. Weather and other delays

- Adverse weather, high swells, and vessel ranging further ensured the below-par performance at the Port of Cape Town.
- Adverse weather conditions and frequent equipment breakdowns caused some delays in Durban.
- Eastern Cape ports had to deal with some strong winds this week.
- Despite minimal reported delays, the adverse weather slightly affected Richards Bay this week.

ii. Cape Town

On Thursday, CTCT recorded three vessels at berth and one at anchor, with two vessels off port limits taking shelter from the adverse weather. The Maersk Sheerness has experienced approximately 17 days of berthing delays. However, the vessel is off-port limits and not registered for anchorage, according to TNPA. Nevertheless, this vessel should still be regarded as delayed. Stack occupancy for GP containers was recorded at 25%, reefers at 67%, and empties at 38%. In the latest 24-hour period to Thursday, the terminal handled 1 245 TEUs across the quay as operational performance remains below par. 574 trucks were serviced on the landside, while 38 rail import containers were on hand, with only one destined for export markets. This reality clearly indicates TFR's inability to handle any meaningful volumes.

Towards the latter end of the week, the terminal had several challenges, including fumes on the Bear Mountain Bridge and a roof caving in at A-check's gate 1. Additionally, despite the poor operational performance at the terminal, they still found time to facilitate labour engagements, ensuring that at least seven operational hours were lost on Wednesday.

The multi-purpose terminal, on Thursday, recorded zero vessels at anchor and one at berth. In the prior 24 hours, the terminal managed to service 173 external trucks at an undisclosed truck turnaround time on the

landside. During the same period, 515 TEUs were moved across the quay on the waterside. Stack occupancy was recorded at 22% for GP containers, 72% for reefers, and 7% for empties during the same period. Furthermore, the MSC Radiant finally berthed around 13:00 on Tuesday after experiencing extensive berthing delays this week.

The FPT private terminal reported zero vessels at anchorage while servicing four vessels at berth on Wednesday. During the 24 hours leading to Thursday, the terminal handled 868 breakbulk tons, 407 TEUs, and 1 230 pallets of fruit on the waterside while servicing 365 trucks on the landside. At the same time, reefer stack occupancy was recorded at 40%.

iii. Durban

Pier 1 on Wednesday recorded two vessels at berth, operated by five gangs, and four vessels at anchor. Stack occupancy was 55% for GP containers and 25% for reefers. During the same period, 1 519 imports were on hand, with 62 units having road stops and 72 unassigned. Despite losing 13 hours to strong winds, the terminal recorded 479 landside gate moves, with an undisclosed number of cancelled slots and 45 wasted. The truck turnaround time was recorded at ~171 minutes, with an average staging time of ~181 minutes.

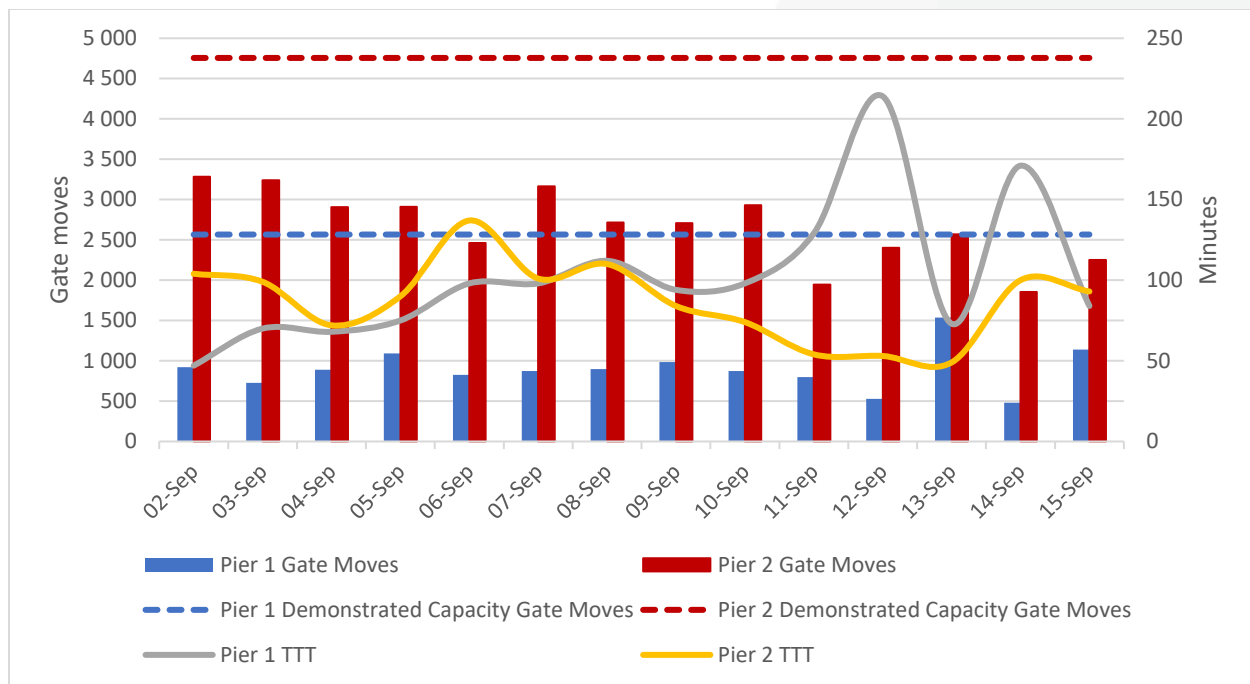
Pier 2 had four vessels at berth and one at anchorage on Thursday. In the prior 24 hours, stack occupancy was 62% for GP containers and 66% for reefers, with 67% of reefer ground slots utilised. The terminal operated with ten gangs while moving 1 846 TEUs across the quay despite losing more than 13 hours to adverse weather. During the same period, there were 1 853 gate moves on the landside with a truck turnaround time of ~100 minutes and a staging time of ~80 minutes. Challenges surrounding straddle carrier availability improved towards the end of the week, as 67 straddles were available on Thursday morning. Of the landside gate moves, 1 494 (81%) were for imports and 359 (19%) for exports. Additionally, 1 164 rail import containers were on hand, with 86 moved by rail. On Thursday, the terminal had 19 out-of-gauge import containers on hand, with a few units having high dwell times.

Durban's MPT terminal recorded one container vessel at berth on Thursday and none at outer anchorage while handling 254 TEU zero breakbulk tons on the waterside. The next breakbulk vessel will arrive on Sunday, 17 September 2023. Stack occupancy for breakbulk was recorded at 10% during that time and at 27% for containers, with 61 reefer plug points available. The terminal handled 375 container road slots and five breakbulk trucks containing 146 tons on the landside. During the same period, two cranes, eight reach stackers, one empty handler, eight forklifts and 21 ERFs were in operation.

On Wednesday, the Ro-Ro terminal in Durban recorded one vessel on the berth, with zero at outer anchorage. Over the prior 24 hours, the terminal managed to handle 1 161 units on the waterside. On the landside, they managed to handle 1 245 units, of which 684 were received and 547 despatched, while handling 145 rail units. During the same period, general stack occupancy was recorded at 81%, G-berth was recorded low at 20%, and Q/R at 30%.

The following figure summarises the performance of Durban's container terminals for the last two weeks, focusing on gate moves and time spent in the terminals.

Figure 8 – Gate moves (left axis) and time spent in the terminal (in minutes, right axis)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2022. Updated 15/09/2023.

iv. Richards Bay

On Monday, Richards Bay recorded 12 vessels at anchor: eight destined for DBT, one for MPT, one for RBCT, and two for liquid. The port also recorded 14 vessels on berth, translating to six at DBT, five at MPT, two at RBCT, and one at the liquid bulk terminal. Two tugs, one pilot boat, and one helicopter were in operation for marine resources in the 24 hours leading to Tuesday. As the week progressed, the pilot boat journeyed to Durban to aid waterside operations.

v. Eastern Cape ports

NCT on Wednesday recorded two vessels on the berth and one vessel at the outer anchorage. Marine resources of one tug, a pilot boat, two pilots, and one berthing gang were in operation in the 24 hours leading up to Thursday. In the same period, stack occupancy was 32% for GP containers, 56% for reefers, and 81% for reefer ground slots. In that period, despite being operationally challenged, 1 979 TEUs were processed at a GCH of ~21 and SWH of ~45. Additionally, 267 reefers were handled, while 672 trucks were serviced on the landside at a truck turnaround time of ~35 minutes. The technical team at the port were still conducting fault-finding operations by the end of the week to determine the extent of the damage on the tug.

GCT on Tuesday recorded one vessel at outer anchorage and one at berth. Available waterside resources were two tugs, a pilot boat, two pilots, and one berthing gang in the 24 hours to Wednesday. The port, however, started sharing tugs with NCT when its tug went out of commission. In the same period, stack occupancy was recorded at 42% for GP containers, 17% for reefers, and 38% for reefer ground slots. On the waterside, 548 TEUs and 148 reefers were handled across the quay at a GCH of ~17 and SWH of ~24. Additionally, 351 trucks were serviced on the landside at a truck turnaround time of ~29 minutes.

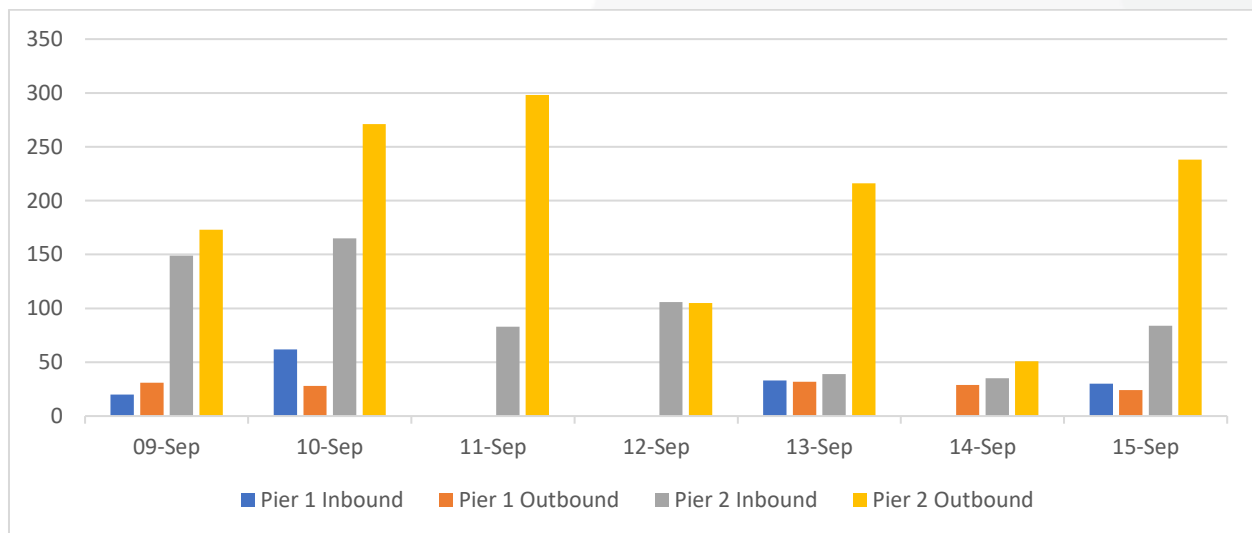
vi. Saldanha Bay

On Thursday, the iron ore terminal had two vessels at anchorage and two on the berth, while the multi-purpose terminal had three on the berth and three waiting at anchor. The vessels at anchor have been waiting outside for approximately 1-3 days, while those in the port have been on berth for 1-4 days.

vii. Transnet Freight Rail (TFR)

One of the main reasons for the increased number of ConCor units on hand in Durban this week can be attributed to challenges such as cable theft, vandalism, and failures on the overhead powerlines. Additionally, for the most significant part of the week, the Ro-Ro terminal in Durban could not meet operational targets due to the late arrival of trains caused by cable theft on the rail network. On Tuesday, only three out of six loading plans could be completed in Durban due to the adverse weather experienced. Furthermore, at the end of the week, DCTs Pier 2 had 869 ConCor units on hand with a dwell time of 192 hours (8 days) and 272 over-border units with a dwell time of 47 days.

Figure 9 – TFR: Rail handled (Pier 1 and Pier 2)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2022. Updated 15/09/2023.

In the last week (9 to 15 September), rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **2 320** containers, down **↓3%** from the previous week's **2 378** containers.

viii. Other

TNPA has published a Request for Information (RFI) for the design, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed Culemborg Intermodal Logistics Precinct or part thereof and related facilities at the Port of Cape Town. In terms of the Port Development Framework Plan (PDFP), the expansion of the port requires the development of land parcels near the port to create the additional back of port capacity. Under the PDFP, the Culemborg Precinct is earmarked for mixed-use functionality, which includes a focus on logistics provision to support the port. RFI documents can be accessed from the National Treasury's e-tender publication portal¹¹.

¹¹ Treasury. <https://www.etenders.gov.za/> & Transnet <https://transnetetenders.azurewebsites.net/>

2. Air Update

a. International air cargo

The following table shows the in- and outbound air cargo flows to and from ORTIA for the week beginning 4 September. For comparative purposes, the average air freight cargo (inbound and outbound) handled at ORTIA in *September 2022* averaged **~764 378 kg** per day.

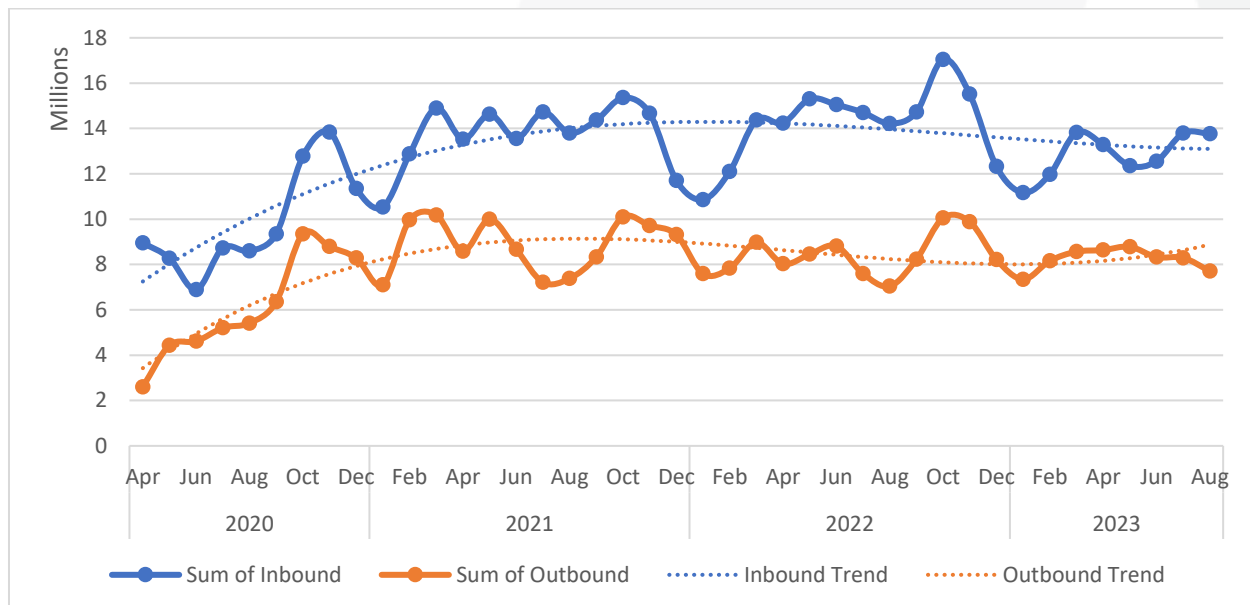
Table 4 – International inbound and outbound cargo from OR Tambo¹²

Flows	04-Sep	05-Sep	06-Sep	07-Sep	08-Sep	09-Sep	10-Sep	Week
Volume inbound	480 391	327 151	397 664	296 692	560 479	277 282	946 843	3 286 502
Volume outbound	246 905	198 782	225 337	214 806	238 002	196 752	588 157	1 908 741
Total	727 296	525 933	623 001	511 498	798 481	474 034	1 535 000	5 195 243

Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 12/09/2023.

The daily average volume of air cargo handled at ORTIA the previous week amounted to **469 500 kg** inbound (**↑6%**, w/w) and **272 677 kg** outbound (**↓5%**), resulting in an average of **742 178 kg per day** or around **~97%** compared with in September 2022. However, the level is currently at only **~80%** compared with the same period pre-pandemic in 2019 but continues to trend upwards slowly. The following graphs show the movement since the pandemic's onset:

Figure 10 – International cargo from OR Tambo – volumes per month (kg millions)



Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 12/09/2023.

¹² Only ORTIA's international volumes are shown. ORTIA handles ~87% of international cargo to and from South Africa.

b. Domestic air cargo

The following table shows the domestic inbound and outbound air cargo flows as reported by the industry. By way of comparison, the average domestic air freight cargo (inbound and outbound) handled in *September 2022* was **~66 903 kg** per day.

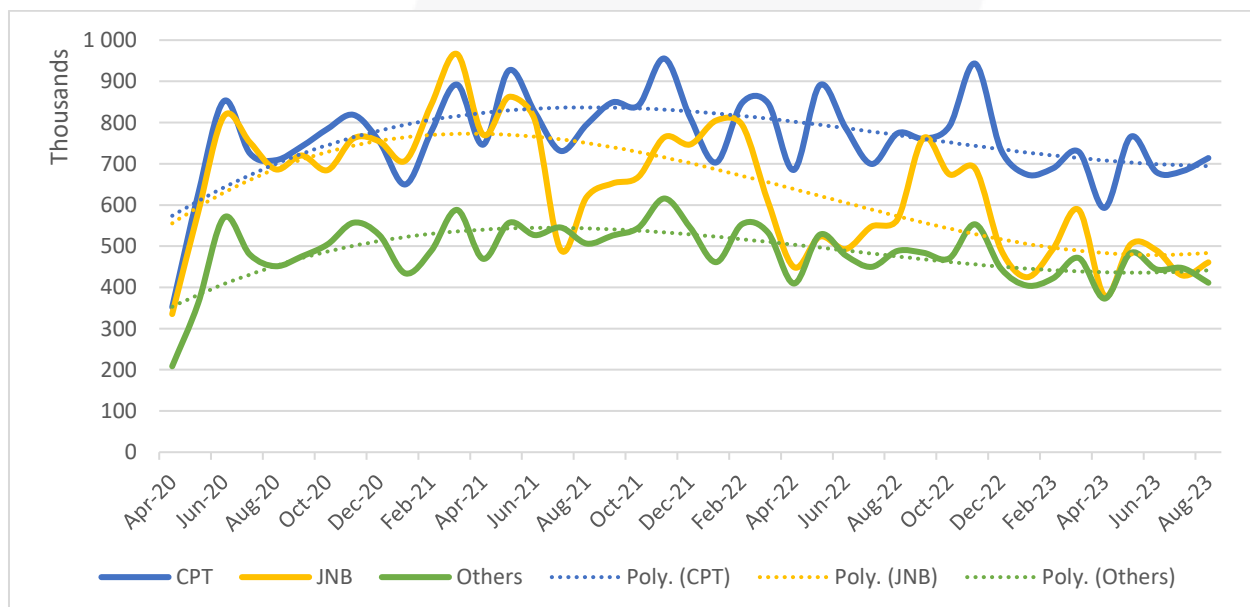
Table 5 – Total domestic inbound and outbound cargo (average daily)

DATE / AIRPORT	CPT	DUR	ELS	JNB	PLZ	OTHERS	TOTAL
Apr-Dec '20 Ave.	22 928	2 514	3 441	21 890	5 818	3 141	59 733
2021 Average	26 852	3 776	3 474	24 379	6 828	3 309	68 619
2022 Average	25 922	3 263	3 232	20 278	6 633	2 909	62 237
Jan-Jun '23 Ave.	22 690	2 770	2 632	15 821	6 177	2 691	52 781
July Ave.	22 006	2 645	2 737	13 836	6 513	2 517	50 255
Aug Ave.	23 029	2 477	2 505	14 863	5 709	2 573	51 157
Sep Ave.	22 860	3 029	2 705	15 845	6 657	2 975	54 071
02-Sep	1 600	523	367	592	211	38	3 331
03-Sep	822	335	189	334	865	473	3 017
04-Sep	35 468	5 059	3 953	26 625	11 586	5 028	87 719
05-Sep	40 750	3 296	4 424	24 867	10 292	3 683	87 312
06-Sep	34 131	4 359	4 416	25 686	12 272	5 273	86 137
07-Sep	38 886	4 504	4 648	23 695	9 671	4 280	85 683
08-Sep	16 819	2 795	1 644	14 936	4 418	2 584	43 195
Total for 2023:	5 708 496	687 211	663 205	3 895 767	1 556 434	671 336	13 182 449

Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 12/09/2023.

The average domestic air cargo moved last week was **~56 628 kg** per day, up by **↑5%** compared to the previous week and remains slightly down compared to last year's level (**~85%**). However, the level is currently at **~63%** compared with the same period pre-pandemic in 2019.

Figure 11 – Domestic inbound and outbound cargo (thousands)



Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 12/09/2023.

3. Road and Regional Update

a. Cross-border and road freight delays

This week, the following points should be noted in terms of challenges and delays on roads in South Africa and the surroundings in the SADC region.

- The median border crossing times at South African borders increased by **80 minutes**, averaging **~11,4 hours (↑12%, w/w)** for the week. In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) increased by approximately **the same magnitude** and averaged **~9,4 hours (↑16%, w/w)**.
- The Home Affairs Minister recently announced plans to deploy "high technology," including Gamma-ray technology, at South African borders¹³.
 - Groblersbrug is not mentioned among the borders slated for upgrades, which include Beitbridge, Lebombo, Maseru Bridge, Ficksburg, Kopfontein, and Oshoek.
 - An American company has offered Gamma-ray scanners to South Africa. However, these scanners can only handle up to 40 vehicles per hour, compared to the high-speed scanners in Malaba, which can handle up to 200 vehicles per hour.
 - Additionally, Gamma-ray technology is complex, effective only on specific items, and not yet proven to be reliable.
- Long queues, reaching up to 25 kilometres, were observed at Lebombo on a Friday.
 - Requests to open both canopies for trucks have been made but often ignored.
 - However, the canopy was opened once, allowing for greater throughput, though it remains uncertain if this will continue regularly.
- Lastly, SA's biggest wildlife reserve and some local businesses oppose plans for a new privately operated trucks-only border crossing to speed up mineral exports to ports in neighbouring Mozambique¹⁴.
 - The Logistics Co., indirectly owned by Old Mutual's African Infrastructure Investment Managers, plans to open a new route at Komatipoort, the main land crossing from South Africa en route to Maputo, the Mozambican capital.
- As always, transporters, traders, and cargo owners are encouraged to use the non-tariff barrier (NTBs) [online tool](#) developed by UNCTAD and the AfCFTA Secretariat. However, given the questionable effectiveness of this platform, transporters are encouraged to contact FESARTA and join their [TRANSIST Bureau](#)¹⁵, which arguably provides better and more reliable information.

The following table shows the changes in bidirectional flows through South African borders:

Table 6 – Delays¹⁶ summary – South African borders (both directions)

Border Post	Direction	HGV ¹⁷ Arrivals per day	Queue Time (hours)	Border Time – Best 5% (hours)	Border Time – Median (hours)	HGV Tonnage per day	Weekly HGV Arrivals
Beitbridge	SA-Zimbabwe	413	4,4	8,3	24,0	12 390	2 891

¹³ SAMI. 08/09/2023. [Hi-tech to plug loopholes at porous borders](#).

¹⁴ Bloomberg. 14/09/2023. [Kruger Park opposes new border link to Mozambique](#).

¹⁵ [FESARTA TRANSIST Bureau](#).

¹⁶ It should be noted that the root cause of the reported delays is uncertain at this point. Moreover, the delays may be multiple and widely distributed. Therefore, they cannot be exclusively attributed to a specific common cross-border problem since we do not have a transparent view of the entire border process in granular detail. The causes of these bottlenecks typically include poor infrastructure, road congestion, and a lack of coordination between neighbouring countries and Customs (or OGA) stops, among other trade obstacles. Data provided by the LMS (Logistics Monitoring System), which is produced by Crickmay in collaboration with SAAFF.

¹⁷ Heavy Goods Vehicles. Note: These statistics are rolling averages; therefore, they would not typically change weekly, rather monthly.

Border Post	Direction	HGV ¹⁷ Arrivals per day	Queue Time (hours)	Border Time – Best 5% (hours)	Border Time – Median (hours)	HGV Tonnage per day	Weekly HGV Arrivals
Beitbridge	Zimbabwe-SA	387	4,2	2,1	17,0	11 610	2 709
Groblersbrug	SA-Botswana	235	0,0	13,0	20,3	7 050	1 645
Groblersbrug	Botswana-SA	148	0,6	0,4	2,2	4 440	1 036
Vioolsdrif	SA-Namibia	30	1,4	1,2	3,4	900	210
Noordoewer	Namibia-SA	20	0,2	0,4	1,3	600	140
Nakop	SA-Namibia	30	3,0	1,3	7,4	900	210
Ariamsvlei	Namibia-SA	20	0,3	0,4	1,2	600	140
Lebombo	SA-Mozambique	1 610	4,0	2,6	10,3	48 300	11 270
Ressano Garcia	Mozambique-SA	89	4,3	0,5	8,3	2 670	623
Skilpadshek	SA-Botswana	200	1,1	1,2	3,1	4 800	1 400
Pioneer Gate	Botswana-SA	100	0,6	0,5	2,5	2 400	700
Weighted Average/Sum		3 282	2,0	2,7	8,4	96 660	22 974

Source: TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 10/09/2023.

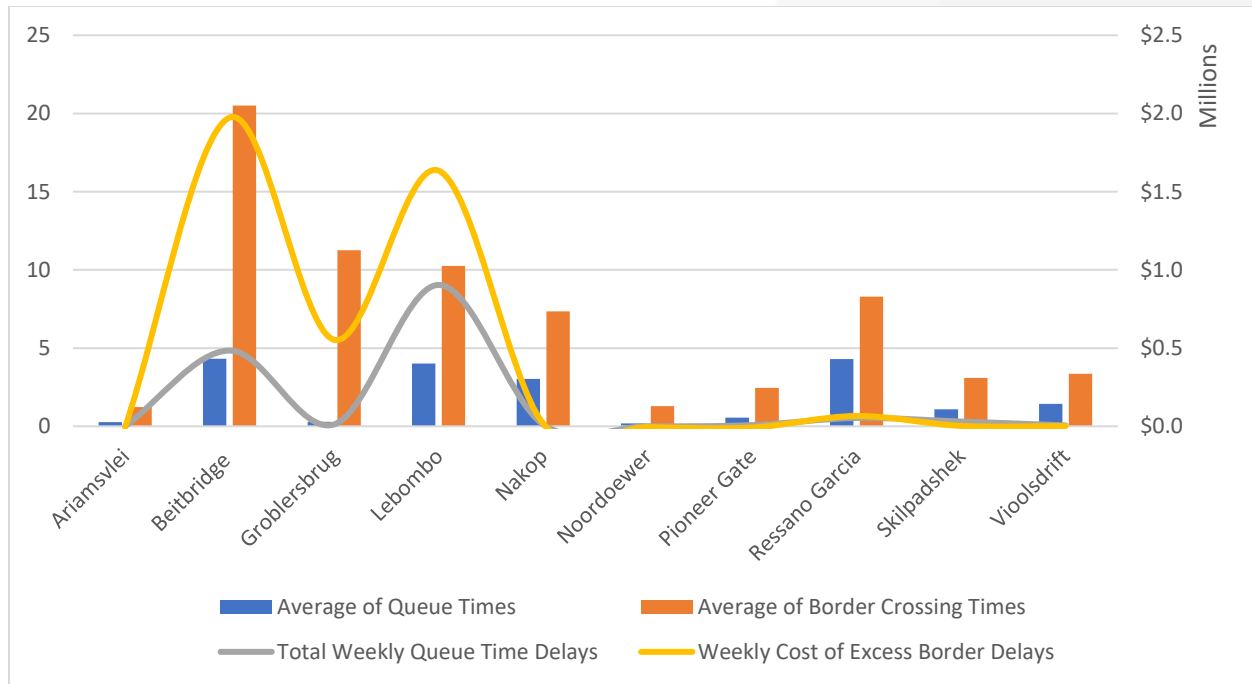
Table 7 – Delays summary – Corridor perspective

Corridor	HGV Arrivals per day	Queue Time	Border Time – Best 5%	Border Time – Median	HGV Tonnage per day	Weekly HGV Arrivals
Beira Corridor	320	11,1	3,0	20,0	9 600	2 240
Dar Es Salaam Corridor	1 819	43,8	1,9	18,5	54 570	12 733
Maputo Corridor	1 699	4,2	1,5	9,3	50 970	11 893
Nacala Corridor	127	0,0	0,0	0,0	3 810	889
North/South	3 255	17,1	2,6	13,4	74 160	22 785
Trans Caprivi Corridor	116	0,0	0,0	0,0	3 480	812
Trans Cunene Corridor	100	0,0	0,0	0,0	3 000	700
Trans Kalahari Corridor	330	1,1	1,0	3,1	7 920	2 310
Trans Oranje Corridor	100	1,2	0,8	3,3	3 000	700
Weighted Average/Sum	7 866	13,7	1,7	9,7	210 510	55 062

Source: TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 10/09/2023.

The following graph shows the weekly change in cross-border times and associated estimated costs:

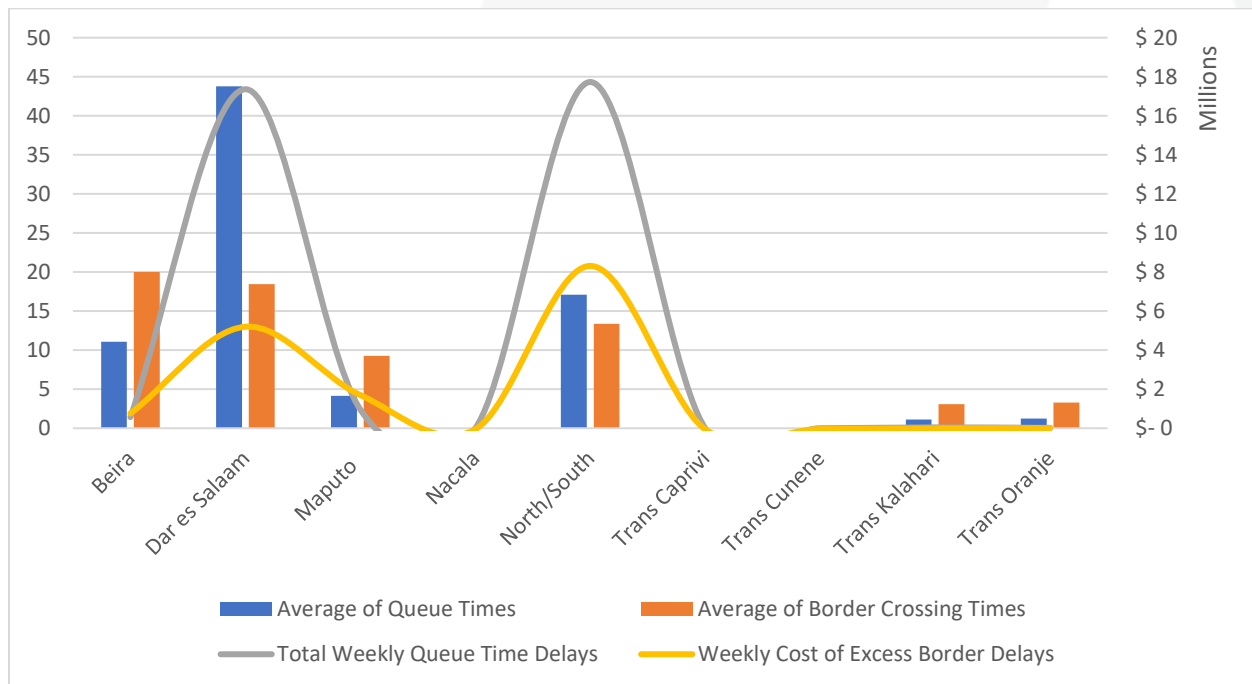
Figure 12 – Weekly cross-border delays & est. cost from a SA border perspective (hours & \$ millions)¹⁸



TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 10/09/2023.

The following figure echoes those above, this time from a corridor perspective.

Figure 13 – Weekly cross-border delays & est. cost from a corridor perspective (hours & \$ millions)



Source: TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 10/09/2023.

¹⁸ Currency adjusted weekly. The prevailing ZAR/US\$ exchange rate at noon every Friday is used.

In summary, cross-border queue time averaged **~13,7 hours** (unchanged from the previous week's **~13,7 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **\$36,7 million (R698 million)**. Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times hovered around **~9,7 hours** (up by **~1,3 hours** from the **~8,4 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **\$13,7 million (R261 million)**. As a result, the total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~\$52,5 million (R1 billion)**, up by **~R34 million** or **↑3,5%** from **R966 million** in the previous report).

4. International Update

The following section provides some context around the global economy and its impact on trade, including an update on **(a)** the global shipping industry and **(b)** the global aviation industry.

a. Global shipping industry

i. Global container port throughput

Alphaliner this week released the throughput figures for the top 30 container ports in the first half of 2023, with Shanghai maintaining their top spot at **23,7 million TEU** handled¹⁹. Singapore (**19 million**) and Ningbo-Zhoushan (**17,7 million**) follow in second and third place.

¹⁹ Alphaliner. 15/09/2023. [Top 30 Ports in H1 2023](#).

Table 8 – Top 30 ports in H1 2023 (H1 2022 rankings in brackets)

Rank	Rank	Port	1H 2023	1H 2022	Growth 1H 23/22	FY 2022	Growth FY 22/21	1Q 2023	Growth 1Q 23/22
1	(1)	Shanghai	23,730,000	22,530,000	5.3%	47,280,000	0.5%	11,470,000	-6.4%
2	(2)	Singapore	19,029,400	18,406,900	3.4%	37,289,500	-0.5%	9,009,400	-0.7%
3	(3)	Ningbo-Zhoushan	17,690,000	17,480,000	1.2%	33,360,000	7.3%	8,190,000	3.4%
4	(6)	Qingdao	13,940,000	12,470,000	11.8%	25,660,000	8.3%	6,620,000	12.2%
5	(4)	Shenzhen	13,530,000	14,400,000	-6.0%	30,040,000	4.5%	6,170,000	-4.9%
6	(5)	Guangzhou	12,130,000	11,740,000	3.3%	24,600,000	1.7%	5,610,000	2.4%
7	(7)	Busan	11,511,449	11,258,198	2.2%	22,078,196	-2.8%	5,639,095	1.0%
8	(8)	Tianjin	11,360,000	10,520,000	8.0%	21,030,000	3.8%	5,050,000	9.1%
9	(9)	LA/LB	7,870,055	10,421,679	-24.5%	19,044,816	-5.1%	3,558,419	-30.8%
10	(10)	Hong Kong	7,133,000	8,429,000	-15.4%	16,687,000	-6.3%	3,432,000	-7.4%
11	(13)	Dubai	7,059,000	6,984,000	1.1%	13,970,000	1.7%	3,500,000	2.2%
12	(11)	Rotterdam	6,681,000	7,278,000	-8.2%	14,455,000	-5.5%	3,225,000	-11.5%
13	(14)	Port Kelang	n.a.	6,489,021	n.a.	13,223,928	-3.6%	3,291,337	2.6%
14	(12)	Antwerp-Bruges	6,415,000	6,770,000	-5.2%	13,500,000	-5.2%	3,100,000	-5.7%
15	(15)	Xiamen	6,110,000	5,980,000	2.2%	12,420,000	3.2%	2,900,000	0.7%
16	(16)	Tanjung Pelepas	n.a.	5,234,892	n.a.	10,512,806	-6.1%	2,328,608	-10.6%
17	(17)	Kaohsiung	4,334,578	4,881,924	-11.2%	9,491,575	-3.8%	2,111,803	-12.2%
18	(20)	Laem Chabang	4,218,426	4,429,721	-4.8%	8,741,077	2.6%	2,057,122	-7.1%
19	(21)	Ho Chi Minh City	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	8,396,600	5.5%	n.a.	
20	(19)	Hamburg	3,860,705	4,372,259	-11.7%	8,332,709	-5.3%	1,858,850	-17.1%
21	(18)	NY/NJ	3,740,272	4,903,459	-23.7%	9,493,664	5.7%	1,791,059	-24.9%
22	(23)	Tanger Med	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	7,596,800	5.9%	n.a.	n.a.
23	(25)	Mundra	3,480,000	3,265,000	6.6%	6,503,000	-2.4%	1,760,000	3.5%
24	(24)	Jakarta	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6,750,302	0.0%	n.a.	n.a.
25	(22)	Colombo	3,457,861	3,554,450	-2.7%	6,862,178	-5.3%	1,619,753	-12.4%
26	(26)	Nhava Sheva	3,125,433	2,985,235	4.7%	5,959,111	5.8%	1,599,148	6.1%
27	(32)	Rizhao	3,004,000	2,730,000	10.0%	5,800,000	12.0%	1,494,000	15.8%
28	(33)	Lianyungang	2,840,000	2,460,000	15.4%	5,570,000	10.5%	1,460,000	1590.0%
29	(29)	Cai Mep	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5,593,400	3.9%	n.a.	n.a.
30	(27)	Savannah	2,375,409	2,891,093	-17.8%	5,892,133	5.0%	1,184,387	-14.3%

Source: [Alphaliner](#)

Elsewhere, the six European and American ports featuring in the top 30 ranking of major container ports showed across-the-board declines in throughput in the first half of the year as the impact of economic contraction in the West took effect. Los Angeles/Long Beach, New York/New Jersey, Savannah, Rotterdam, Antwerp-Brugge, and Hamburg reported volume reductions of between $\downarrow 5\%$ and $\downarrow 25\%$ in January-June. At the lower end, Antwerp-Brugge's $\downarrow 5\%$ drop was artificially boosted by its merger with Zeebrugge in 2022. It would otherwise have been even more severe, while the three US ports recorded the most significant declines, clearly reflecting the economic downturn since the pandemic. Los Angeles/Long Beach saw a net loss of **2,6 million TEU** in traffic compared to 2022, or a $\downarrow 25\%$ fall in volumes. It remains to be seen if the recent signing of a new labour agreement for West Coast dockworkers can help the port claw back some of the business lost to East Coast ports over the past two years in a complex economic environment.

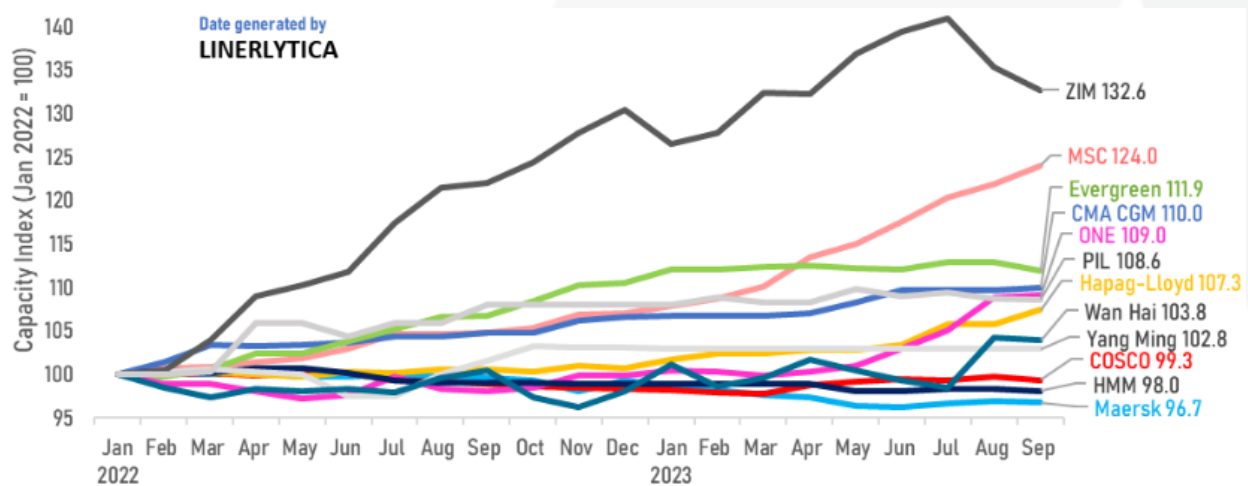
ii. Global container industry summary

Carriers' inability to curtail supply remains the biggest challenge, as capacity utilisation has weakened particularly on the US East Coast and the Med, with rates on both routes falling sharply over the past week

(see below). Despite an increase in the number of blanked sailings out of China scheduled for October (and indeed industry-wide – Drewry's "Cancelled Sailings Tracker" has increased again and is now trending at a **16% cancellation rate**²⁰ this week), there are no permanent service withdrawals announced so far out of China. The idled tonnage remains stubbornly low at just **0,4%** of the current fleet. The delayed entry of several new ships of **15 000 to 24 000 TEU** has not slowed the pace of supply growth, with net deliveries still running at over **180 000 TEU a month**.

On a carrier level, there has been significant movement in capacity recently. MSC and Zim announced on 6 September 2023 a new operational cooperation agreement covering the trades between the Indian subcontinent with the East Mediterranean, the East Mediterranean with Northern Europe, and services connecting East Asia with Oceania. The cooperation is expected to be expanded when the current 2M-Zim collaboration is dissolved in January 2025. MSC is poised to extend its current slot sale agreement with Zim on the Asia-PNW route to cover the Asia-US East Coast and Asia-Med trades. These moves will further isolate Maersk, which will be left without alliance partners on the Transpacific and Asia-Europe routes. This reality could curtail its network coverage and access to incremental vessel tonnage. Overall, Maersk's capacity has shrunk by **↓3%** since 2022 compared to Zim and MSC, which have grown by **↑33%** and **↑24%** respectively:

Figure 14 – Top 12 Carriers: Change in capacity operated since January 2022



Source: [Linerlytica](https://www.linerlytica.com)

Concerning port congestion, the current weak demand and overall reduced supply chain activity (see the latest analysis from the NY Fed, which shows that supply chain pressures peaked at the end of 2021 and have been on a fairly steady path since then²¹) continues only to affect **1,6 million TEU**. The pockets of congestion are concentrated on the southeast coast, with Shanghai/Ningbo, Qingdao, and Busan in South Korea most affected. Closer to home, Durban (at some **19 900 TEU** at anchorage) and PE/NCT (at some **27 700 TEU** at anchorage) remain congested, with queue-to-berth ratios of **0,53** and **5,71**, respectively.

iii. Global container freight rates

Weak peak season volumes coupled with oversupply across the main markets have weighed down heavily on rates, with little chance of a reversal until November at the earliest²². The "World Container Index" decreased by **↓7,1%** (or **\$119**) to **\$1 561** per 40-ft container this week²³:

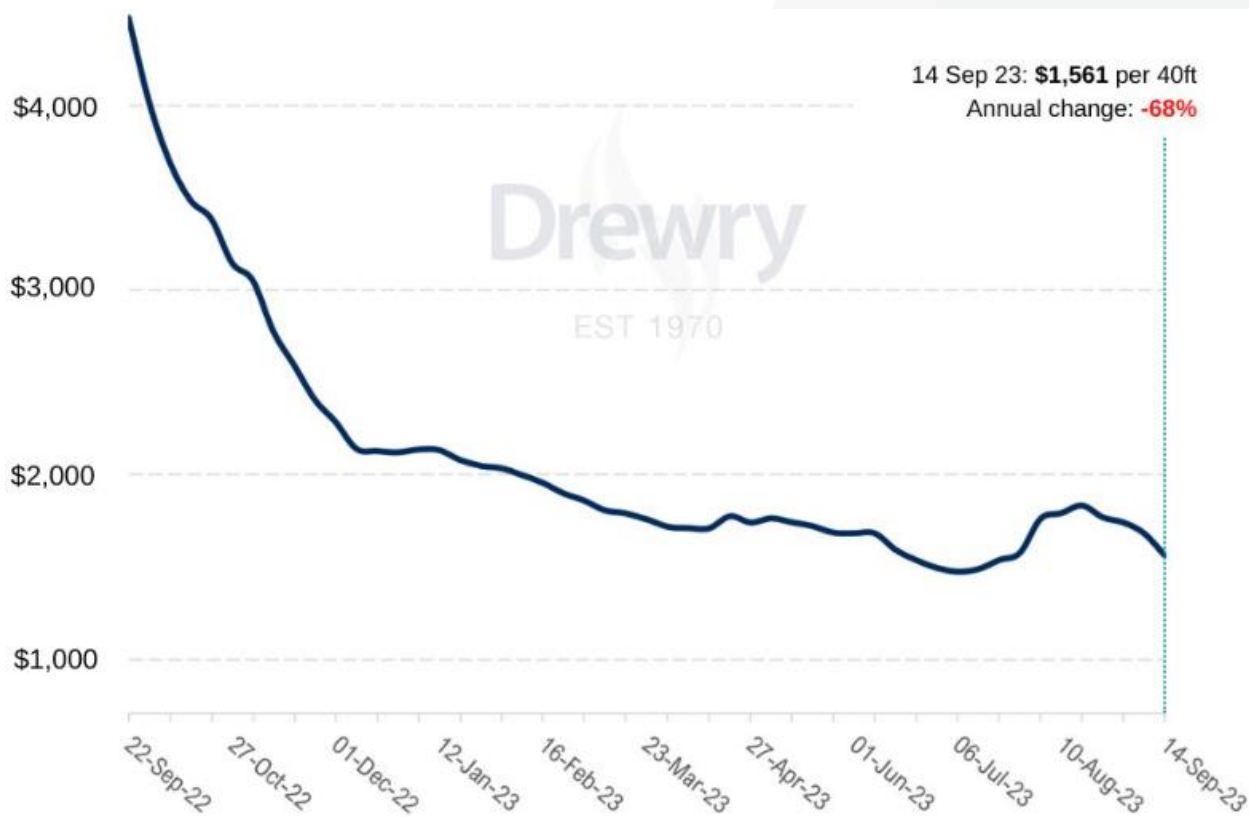
²⁰ Drewry. 15/09/2023. [Cancelled Sailings Tracker - 15 September](https://www.drewry.com/insights/cancelled-sailings-tracker-15-september).

²¹ NY Fed. 11/09/2023. [Supply chain Pressure Index – August 2023](https://www.newyorkfed.org/outlook/supply-chain-pressure-index-august-2023).

²² Linerlytica. 12/09/2023. [Market Pulse – Week 37](https://www.linerlytica.com/insights/market-pulse-week-37).

²³ Drewry. 14/09/2023. [World Container Index – 14 September 2023](https://www.drewry.com/insights/world-container-index-14-september-2023).

Figure 15 – World Container Index assessed by Drewry (last 12 months, \$ per 40 ft. container)



Source: [Compiled from Drewry Ports and Terminal Insights](#)

The composite index is now **↓68,4%** lower than the same week last year. It is **↓85%** below the peak in September 2021 but still 10% higher than pre-pandemic rates in 2019. The year-to-date average is **\$1 763**, significantly lower than the 10-year average of **\$2 680**. Freight rates on all routes decreased, most notably on the Shanghai to New York (**↓11%**), Genoa (**↓10%**) and Rotterdam (**↓10%**) routes. Drewry anticipates East-West spot rates to remain relatively stable in the coming weeks.

iv. Further developments of note

Apart from the overview provided above, there were some additional noteworthy developments this week:

1. Dry bulk market optimism:

- a. Anticipated growth in the demand for dry bulk cargo offers promising prospects for the shipping industry. According to Bimco's comprehensive third-quarter market overview and outlook²⁴, 2023 is projected to see an expansion of between **↑1,5%** and **↑2,5%**, with further steady growth of **1%-2%** expected for 2024.
- b. Iron ore shipments are estimated to grow **↑4,5%** from 2022 to 2024, while coal shipments could be **↑2,4%** higher in 2024 than in 2022.
- c. On the supply side, the current orderbook stands at **7,7%** of the dry bulk fleet, as weak rates and fuel uncertainty keep investment in new-builds low.

²⁴ BIMCO. 05/09/2023. [Dry Bulk Shipping Market Overview & Outlook Q3 2023](#).

2. Maersk launches an industry-first green methanol ship:

- a. With their focus turned away from conventional market expansion, Maersk has officially launched the world's first methanol-powered container vessel, the **2 100-TEU Laura Maersk**, christened by EC president Ursula von der Leyen²⁵.
- b. The vessel, which is ice-class, will enter service next month on one of Maersk's Baltic feeder services, with a port rotation from Bremerhaven to Kiel Canal, Helsingborg, Halmstad, Fredericia, Kalundborg, Kiel Canal, and back to Bremerhaven.
- c. Maersk's chairman, Robert Uggla, emphasised the significance of this methanol-powered ship as the beginning of a new green revolution in supply chains and noted the ongoing development and retrofitting of more than 170 ships to run on green methanol.

3. MSC wants Hamburg as a 'global hub' and bids for 49,9% of the port operator:

- a. MSC has announced plans to make Hamburg the central hub of its global network, intending to raise its annual throughput at the German port to one million TEU²⁶.
- b. MSC has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the city of Hamburg to acquire a 49,9% stake in the port terminal, transport, and logistics business of HHLA Group, a majority-owned city entity.
- c. However, in an unexpected development, MSC on Friday announced its plan to purchase all publicly traded A shares of HHLA at **€16,75 per share**, offering a substantial premium of **57%** over the 30-day volume-weighted average price²⁷.
- d. This partnership aims to develop HHLA and the entire port of Hamburg, positioning it as a central hub for MSC's global container services. MSC also plans to move its German headquarters from Bremen to Hamburg. Hamburg's container throughput has faced challenges, with declining volumes in the first half of the year compared to rivals Rotterdam and Antwerp-Bruges.

4. G20 unveils plan for IMEC trade corridor to rival China's BRI:

- a. The G20 summit, hosted by India over the weekend, saw the development of an ambitious intercontinental transport programme to boost cross-border trade between India, the Middle East and Europe, paving the way for more integrated and swifter global supply chain solutions²⁸.
- b. The proposed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) – arguably designed to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – will involve sea-rail connectivity links, which industry pundits believe have the potential to make India-Europe cargo flows significantly faster – an overall 40% transit improvement according to anecdotal estimates.

b. Global air cargo industry

In the weekly data from World ACD, global tonnages have held firm in the first full week of September after dropping **↓3%** at the end of August and in the first few days of September, while average rates continue to hover at around the same level they have since mid-July – between **\$2,26** and **\$2,29 per kg**.

²⁵ Van Marle, G. 14/09/2023. [Maersk launches 'a new age' with the first green methanol ship.](#)

²⁶ Wackett, M. 13/09/2023. [MSC wants Hamburg as 'global hub' and bids for 49.9% of port operator.](#)

²⁷ Drewry. 15/09/2023. [Demystifying MSC's bid to buy HHLA.](#)

²⁸ Mathias, A. 11/09/2023. [G20 unveils plan for IMEC trade corridor to rival China's BRI.](#)

Figure 16 – Global capacity, weight, and yield over the last five weeks (% , weekly)

Origin Regions last 2 to 5 weeks	Capacity ¹			Chargeable weight ¹			Yield/rate ¹		
	Last 5 wks	2Wo2W	YoY	Last 5 wks	2Wo2W	YoY	Last 5 wks	2Wo2W	YoY
	Africa		-2%	+2%		-0%	-5%		+1%
Asia Pacific		-1%	+23%		0%	-1%		+0%	-42%
C. & S. America		-2%	-9%		+1%	+0%		+1%	-13%
Europe		-0%	+7%		+4%	-13%		-1%	-33%
M. East & S. Asia		-2%	+8%		-1%	-2%		+1%	-36%
North America		-3%	+3%		-8%	-20%		+0%	-27%
Worldwide		-1%	+7%		-0%	-7%		+0%	-35%

Source: [World ACD](#)

In weeks 35 and 36, global airfreight tonnages and rates remained flat compared to the preceding two weeks. Capacity has decreased slightly by **↓1%** since early August. Notable tonnage decreases (2w/2w) were observed in inflows from North America to Europe (**↓12%**), Asia Pacific (**↓8%**), and Central and South America (**↓7%**), influenced by Labour Day in the USA and Canada. Increases were seen in flows between Europe and Asia Pacific, Europe to North America, and Middle East and South Asia to Asia Pacific. Average global rates remained stable. Compared to last year, chargeable weight decreased by **↓7%**, with a notable decrease in North American and European tonnages. Capacity increased by **↑7%**, while rates remained **↓35%** lower than last year but higher than pre-pandemic levels.

In other air cargo news **(1)**, Cargolux employees have initiated strikes over salary and collective bargaining agreement disputes²⁹. CEO Richard Forson contests claims of inadequate compensation, citing significant profit-sharing payments: €37 502 per employee in 2020, €75 946 in 2021, and €85 296 in 2022. The current dispute centres on a planned **↑6%** pay rise, with Cargolux seeking to link it to profit-sharing, which the unions find unacceptable. Despite 27 rounds of negotiations and five meetings with the National Conciliation Office, an agreement has not been reached. Approximately 120 mechanics initiated the strike, and many 630 pilots are expected to join, with the strike likely to last three days or longer.

(2) DSV bucks the forwarder trend and increases charter flights. DSV launched a twice-weekly 777F charter route from Huntsville, Alabama, to Doha this month. It is now planning to increase its flights from another second-tier US airport – in contrast to other forwarders keen to cut their airfreight capacity³⁰. This year, The Danish logistics operator started its freighter flights with Cargolux from Phoenix-Mesa Airport in Arizona – a strategic move designed to provide direct service in the US state's burgeoning semiconductor and electric vehicle sectors and avoid congestion at major air cargo hubs.

ENDS³¹

²⁹ Whiteman, A. 14/09/2023. [Mechanics strike, and pilots may join in, as Cargolux stands firm on payouts.](#)

³⁰ Todd, S. 15/09/2023. [DSV bucks forwarder trend by increasing charter flights.](#)

³¹ **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

*This initiative – **The Cargo Movement Update** – was developed collectively by Business at large to provide visibility of the movement of goods during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is authored by the South African Association of Freight Forwarders (SAAFF) and distributed by Business Unity South Africa (BUSA). SAAFF acknowledges the input of several key business partners in compiling these reports, which have become a weekly industry staple. This edition is proudly sponsored by [AIMS Global Logistics \(AGL\)](#).*