

Cargo movement update¹

Date: 8 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)	23 862	26 429	50 291	23 011	22 368	45 379	↑11%
Air Cargo (tons)	3 090	2 010	5 101	3 375	1 983	5 358	↓5%

Monthly Snapshot

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

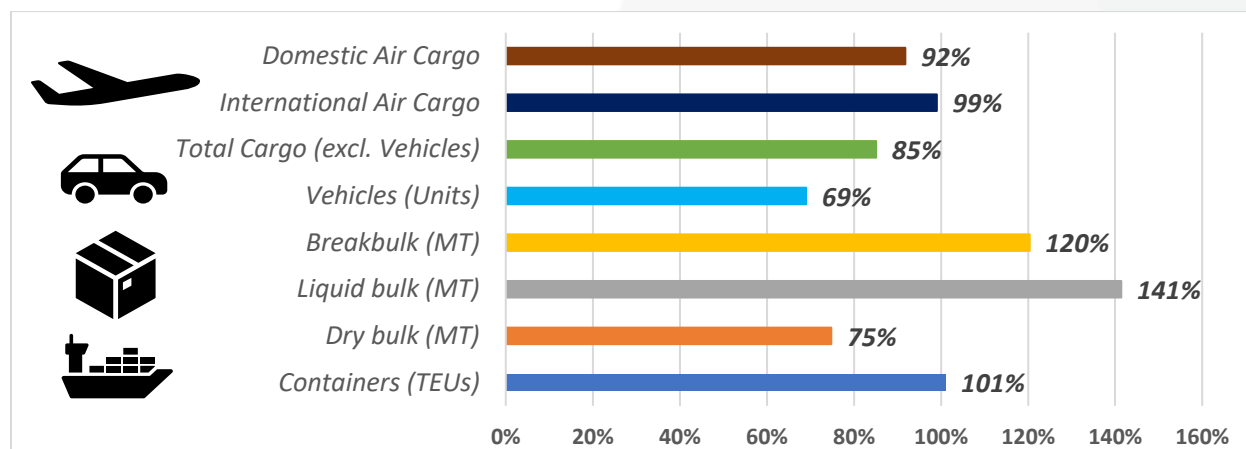
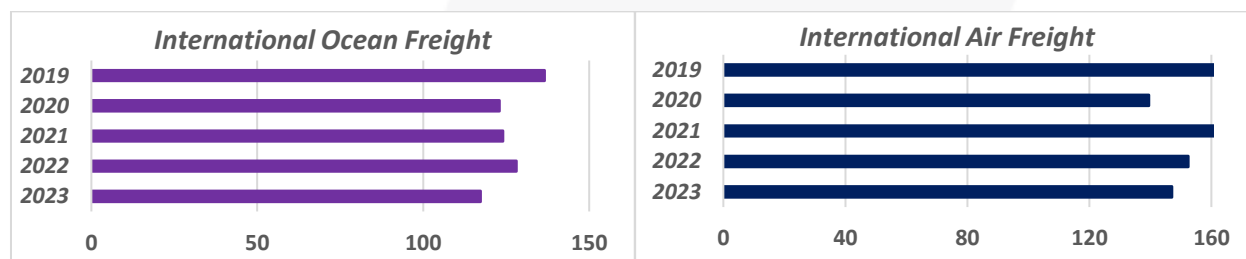


Figure 2 – Global year-to-date flows 2019-2023⁵: ocean, y/y (metric tonnes) & air freight, y/y (kg millions)



Key Notes

- An average of **~7 184 containers** was handled per day, with **~7 326 containers** projected for next week.
- Rail cargo handled out of Durban amounted to **2 378 containers** per day, **↑8%** compared to last week.
- Cross-border queue times were **↓0,5 hours** (w/w), with transit times **↑0,1 hours** (w/w); SA borders increased by **~20 minutes**, averaging **~10,2 hours** (**↑3%**); Other SADC borders averaged **~8,1 hours** (**↑1%**).
- Oxford Economics sees global trade dropping by **↓1,5%** in 2023, against the WTO's predicted **↑1,7%**.
- CTS container throughput in July (dry & reefer) is slightly up by **↑0,1%** (m/m) and up by **↑0,2%** (y/y).
- Global freight rates decreased by **↓3,4%** (or **\$59**) to **\$1 681** per 40-ft container – below Aug's **~\$1 778**.
- Global air cargo demand decreased by **↓0,8%** (y/y) in July, whereas capacity increased by **↑11,2%** (y/y).

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 153rd 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; All metrics: July vs July.

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-Jul cargo to and from ORTIA is used.

Executive Summary

This update – *the 153rd of its kind* – contains a consolidated overview of the South African supply chain and the current state of international trade. Commercial ports handled an average of **7 184 containers** per day – slightly up versus a desperately low **6 646** last week, but still far from anything remotely approaching peak performance. Port operations were characterised by the usual poor weather conditions, frequent equipment breakdowns and shortages, load-shedding, and congestion. Reefer export stacks in Cape Town closed on Thursday with anticipation to reopen the stacks on Saturday around 18:00., while adverse weather and the dismal straddle carrier availability in Durban overshadowed operations at the port. The Richards Bay helicopter returned to service earlier this week, meaning that between Durban and Richards Bay, only one out of 3 helicopters is operational. The newly-repaired one already had to travel to Durban on Thursday to aid waterside operations there. Additionally, more cable theft was experienced on our rail network towards the latter stages of the week, which delayed rail operations for approximately nine hours and prevented trains from departing from King's Rest.

Global supply chain improvements experienced at the end of July have spilt over in August. After facing significant disruptions earlier this year, the US "*Logistics Managers' Index*" rose to **51,2** in August from **45,4** after three months of contraction, indicating positive trends. Inventory and transportation costs decreased slowly, and warehouse usage increased, but inventory costs remained high. It's uncertain whether this is a one-time deviation from contraction or a shift towards expansion, with container throughput offering clues for the near future. Nevertheless, the latest analysis by Oxford Economics and the WTO points to contrasting final trade volumes for the year – further emphasising the prevailing uncertainty globally.

Global container throughput showed a marginal **↑0,1%** (m/m) increase in July, following a **↓1,0%** decrease in June, with total throughput around **15,1 million TEUs**. The 2023 forecast is currently predicted at **↑0,3%**, with a significant boost expected in Africa at around **↑1,8%**. Geographically, Sub-Saharan exports and Australasia and Oceania imports saw significant changes, while Far East imports and exports decreased, indicating ongoing challenges in production and consumption in the Far East. South Africa accounted for a significant portion of Sub-Saharan Africa's imports and exports, although competition in the region is increasing. Port congestion remains relatively low, with some South African ports experiencing congestion. Container ship sizes have increased on certain trade routes, notably the Far East-North America trade. Freight rates saw some fluctuations, rebounding slightly following a September rate increase, but discounts offered by carriers led to market declines. Publicly traded carriers like OOCL and COSCO reported positive second-quarter earnings, with EBIT margins significantly higher than other carriers, indicating variability in the industry. Other developments include **(1)** No sign of resumption of the Black Sea shipping pact, **(2)** Bolloré Logistics may see its brand disappear, and **(3)** HMM service expansion 'not connected' to impending sale.

On the air freight front, international air cargo to and from South Africa decreased slightly in the last week (**↓5%**). For August, total air import volumes were down by **↓3%** (y/y), but export volumes increased by a healthy **↑9%**, leaving total air cargo up by **↑1%**. Incidentally, passenger figures show that international flights are currently at **~89%** versus pre-pandemic levels, whilst domestic flights are at **~93%**. Domestic cargo showed a slight increase this week (**↑7%**, w/w) but remains down on last year's level (**~91%**) and is still way down on pre-pandemic levels (**~60%**). Internationally, IATA shows that despite the slight decrease in CTGs, cargo capacity increased significantly compared to last year, mainly due to the return of belly cargo capacity. Leading indicators, such as manufacturing output PMI and new export orders PMI, were below the threshold of **50**, indicating a decline in global manufacturing production and exports. Over the short run, global

tonnages dropped by ↓3% at the end of August and the beginning of September, aligning with IATA's analysis. Rates remained stable at **\$2,29 per kg**, with global chargeable weight down ↓7% annually.

In regional cross-border road freight trade, average queue time decreased by **half an hour**, while transit times were approximately similar to last week. The median border crossing times at South African borders increased by **20 minutes**, averaging **~10,2 hours (↑3%, w/w)** for the week. In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) increased marginally and averaged **~8,1 hours (↑3%, w/w)**. On average, only the Kasumbalesa border post took more than a day to cross; however, welcome improvements occurred this week as the Congolese Government closed a truck park due to severe congestion. Further notable developments included **(1)** a **~6km** section on the N3 is set to be upgraded and **(2)** the Lebombo border continues to struggle to handle current volumes, as videos circulating show a crowded TIP.

In summary, we cannot emphasise enough that logistics occurs on a shared infrastructure with shared responsibility from all parties – whether users or providers. The ongoing equipment shortages and other shortcomings in our ports are critically important and partly explain why throughput continues to lag and deteriorate. Minister Pravin Gordhan's plan to radically turn around Transnet has been widely welcomed. However, commentators say time is of the essence as the deterioration of the parastatal continues to take a massive toll on the SA economy – not to mention Transnet itself, reporting a **R5,7 billion loss**⁶. However, this figure is a mere week's comparative loss, as Prof Havenga says Transnet's failings cost the economy **R1 billion per day**. Efficient logistics is a critical factor in socio-economic development. Without it functioning correctly, South Africa will continue to grow at the paltry **0,6% GDP** growth rate quoted by Stats SA this week⁷.

⁶ Steyn, L. 02/09/2023. ['No time to waste' on Gordhan's plan for a radical Transnet turnaround.](#)

⁷ Stats SA. 05/09/2023. [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\), 2nd Quarter 2023.](#)

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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 2 to 8 September⁸

7-day flow forecast (02/09/2023 – 08/09/2023)		
TERMINAL	NO. OF CONTAINERS ⁹ TO DISCHARGE (IMPORT)	NO. OF CONTAINERS TO LOAD (EXPORT)
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 1:	4 754	4 970
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 2:	10 681	10 599
CAPE TOWN CONTAINER TERMINAL:	3 064	5 240
NGQURA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	4 442	3 408
GQEERHA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	921	2 212
TOTAL:	23 862	26 429

Source: Transnet, 2023. Updated 08/09/2023.

Table 3 – Container Ports – Weekly flow predicted for 9 to 15 September

7-day flow forecast (09/09/2023 – 15/09/2023)		
TERMINAL	NO. OF CONTAINERS TO DISCHARGE (IMPORT)	NO. OF CONTAINERS TO LOAD (EXPORT)
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 1:	5 070	6 192
DURBAN CONTAINER TERMINAL PIER 2:	10 245	9 561
CAPE TOWN CONTAINER TERMINAL:	3 303	4 528
NGQURA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	5 450	5 909
GQEERHA CONTAINER TERMINAL:	568	459
TOTAL:	24 636	26 649

Source: Transnet, 2023. Updated 01/09/2023.

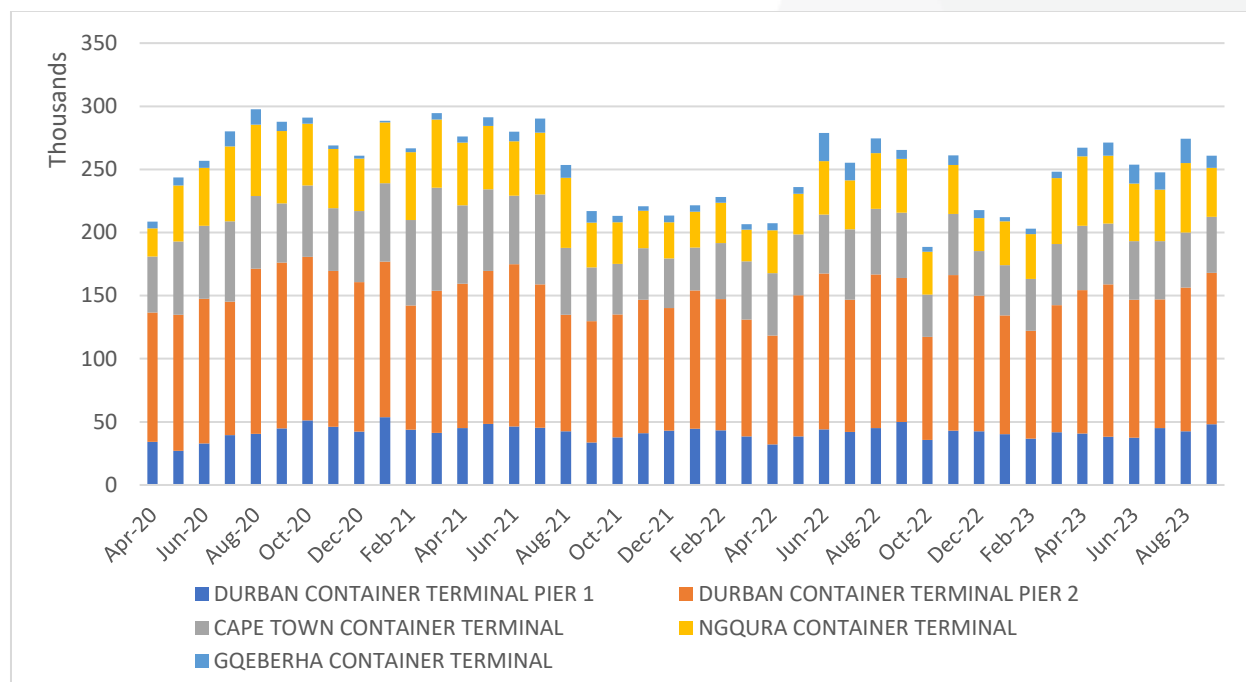
A meagre average of ~**7 184 containers** (↑**11%**) was handled per day for the last week (2 to 8 September, Table 2), compared to the projected average of ~**9 082 containers** (↓**21%** actual versus projected) noted in last week's report. For this week, an increased average of ~**7 326 containers** (↑**2%**) is predicted to be handled (9 to 15 September, Table 3). Port operations were characterised by poor weather conditions, frequent equipment breakdowns and shortages, load-shedding, 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

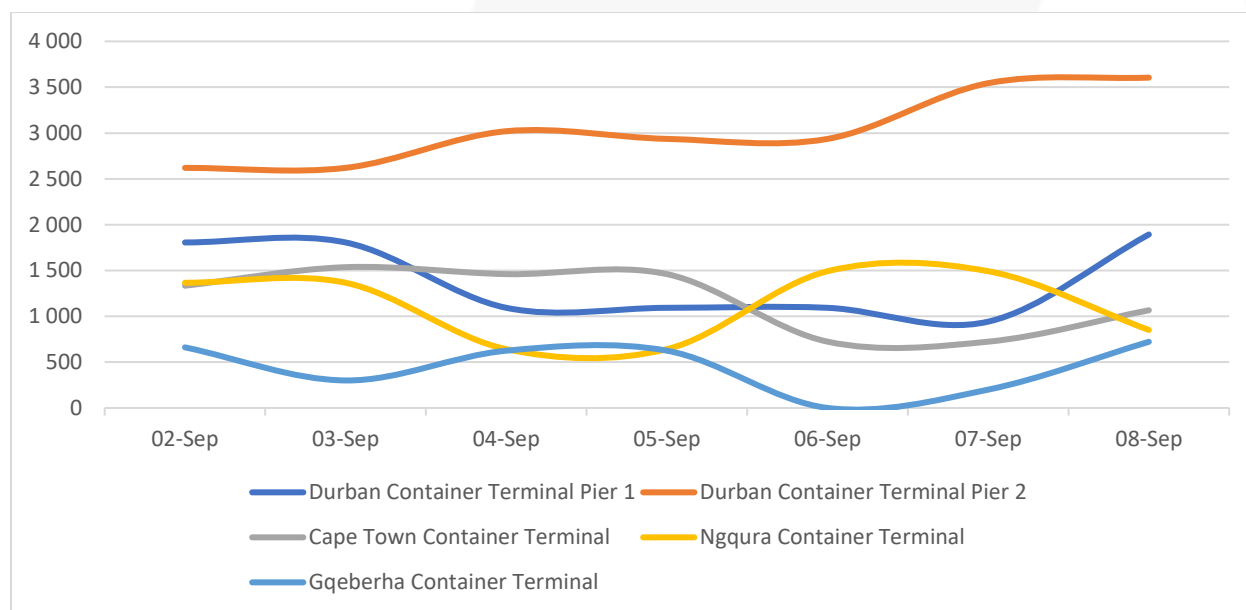
Figure 3 – Monthly flow reported for total cargo movement (containers April 2020 to present, m/m)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 08/09/2023.

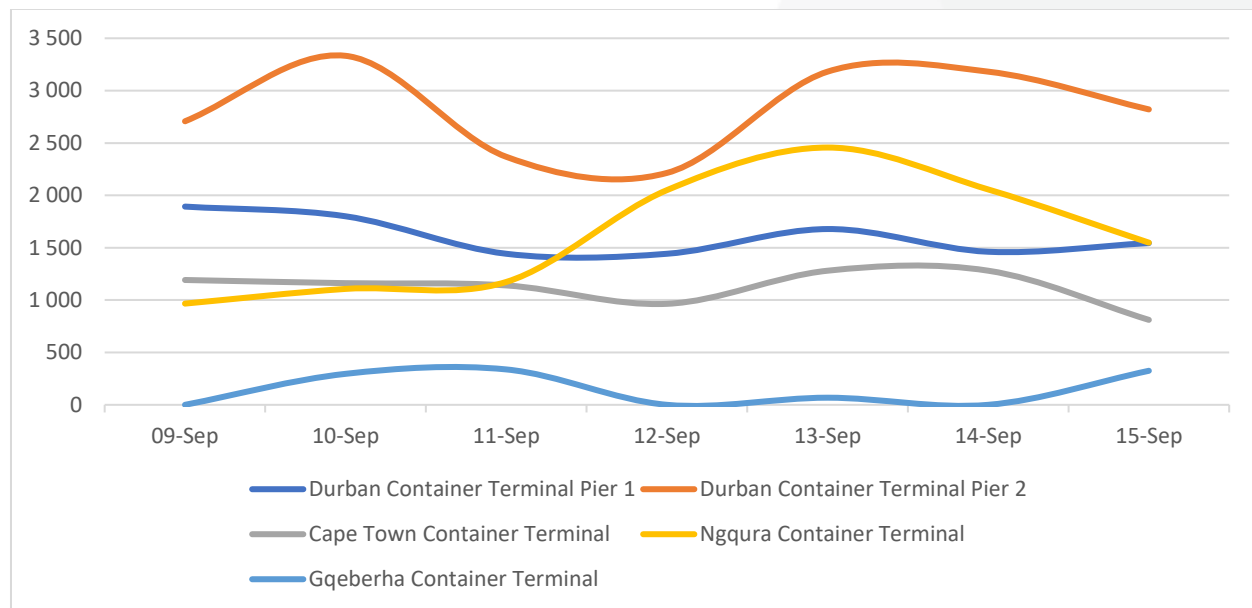
The following figures show the weekly container flows for the last seven days, followed by the projections for the seven days after that.

Figure 4 – 7-day flow reported for total container movements (2 to 8 September; per port; day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 08/09/2023.

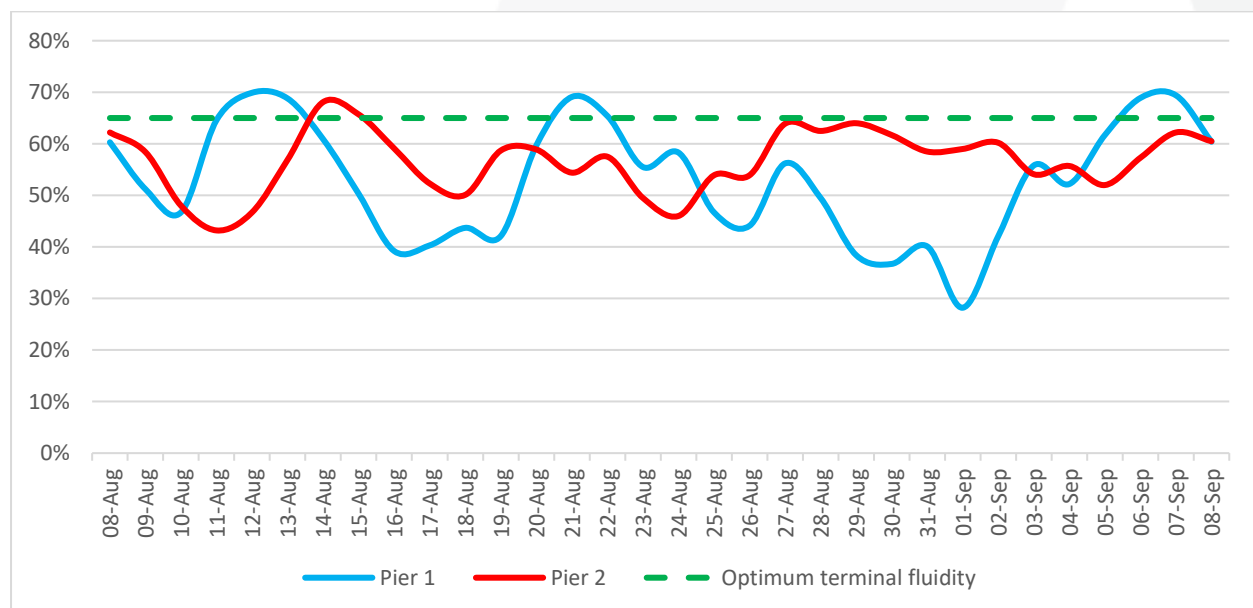
Figure 5 – 7-day forecast reported for total container movements (9 to 15 September; per port; day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 08/09/2023.

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

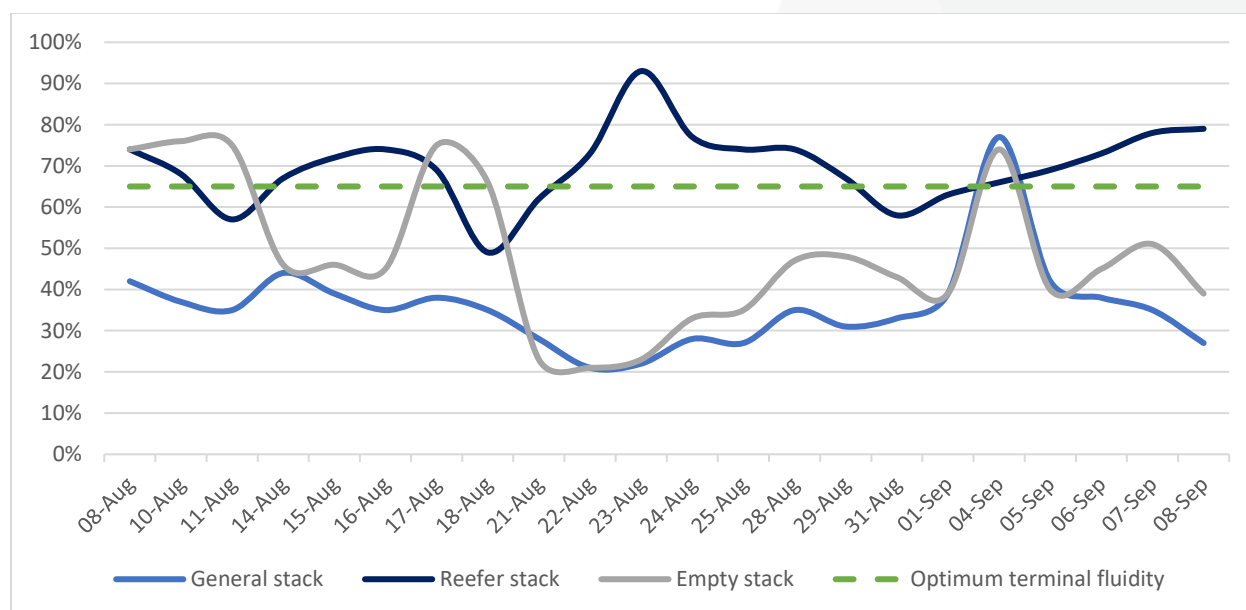
Figure 6 – Stack occupancy in DCT, general-purpose containers (8 August to present; day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 08/09/2023.

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 (8 August to present, day on day)



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2023. Updated 08/09/2023.

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

- Performance in Cape Town was abysmal despite the ideal weather experienced there throughout the week.
- Adverse weather and the dismal straddle carrier availability in Durban overshadowed port operations.
- Poor weather and bouts of load-shedding constrained operations in our Easter Cape ports.
- Approximately nine operational hours in Richards Bay were lost due to inclement weather.

ii. Cape Town

On Thursday, CTCT recorded three vessels at berth and four at anchor, with one vessel out of port limits, as the inadequate operational performance continued and led to berthing delays of up to six days. Stack occupancy for GP containers was recorded at 27%, reefers at 79%, and empties at 39%. In the latest 24-hour period to Friday, the terminal handled 1 916 TEUs across the quay. 1 080 trucks were serviced on the landside, while 42 rail export containers were on hand. The latest reports indicate that reefer export stacks closed completely on Thursday, intending to reopen the stacks on Saturday around 18:00. Caution should thus be upheld as strong winds and high swells are anticipated at the terminal until Monday, which could see the stacks remaining closed beyond the weekend. TPT has advised that reefers will be prioritised from next week onwards as a contingency measure.

The multi-purpose terminal, on Friday, recorded one vessel at anchor and two at berth. In the prior 24 hours, the terminal managed to service 246 external trucks at an undisclosed truck turnaround time on the landside. During the same period, 139 moves were executed across the quay, and 52 092 tons of manganese

were loaded on the waterside. Stack occupancy was recorded at 12% for GP containers, 50% for reefers, and 43% for empties during the same period.

The FPT private terminal reported zero vessels at anchorage while servicing three vessels at berth on Thursday. During the 24 hours leading to Friday, the terminal handled 2 633 dry bulk tons and 98 TEUs on the waterside while servicing 224 trucks on the landside. At the same time, reefer stack occupancy was recorded at 54%.

iii. Durban

Pier 1 on Wednesday recorded two vessels at berth, operated by five gangs, and two vessels at anchor. Stack occupancy was 69% for GP containers and 51% for reefers. During the same period, 1 878 imports were on hand, with 249 units having road stops and 231 unassigned. The terminal recorded 874 landside gate moves, with 416 cancelled slots and 49 wasted. The truck turnaround time was recorded at ~98 minutes, with an average staging time of ~73 minutes. Dredging operations on berth 107 were completed this week, allowing the two-berth operation to resume.

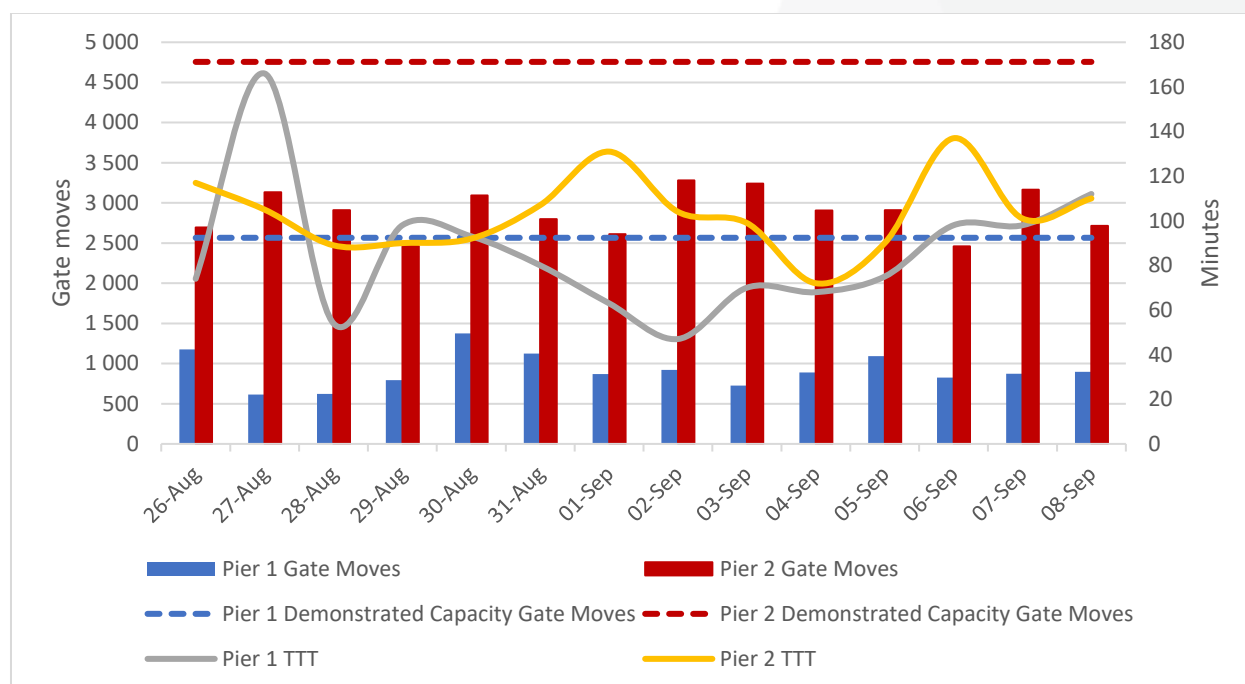
Pier 2 had four vessels at berth and three at anchorage on Thursday. In the 24 hours to Friday, stack occupancy was 61% for GP containers and 65% for reefers, with 69% of reefer plug points utilised. The terminal operated with ten gangs while moving 3 966 TEUs across the quay. During the same period, there were 2 715 gate moves on the landside with a truck turnaround time of ~110 minutes and a staging time of ~156 minutes. Challenges surrounding straddle carrier availability persisted this week, with frequent breakdowns restricting adequate availability. On Thursday morning, the terminal had about 55 straddles in operation. As a result, the issuance of truck appointments was monitored and reviewed every four hours throughout the week. Of the landside gate moves, 1 819 (67%) were for imports and 896 (33%) for exports. Additionally, 918 rail import containers were on hand, with 304 moved by rail. On Friday, the terminal had 26 out-of-gauge containers on hand, with most units having a dwell time between one and three days. A small section of the units has five to six days of dwell time.

Durban's MPT terminal recorded two container vessels at berth on Thursday and two at outer anchorage while handling 325 TEU zero breakbulk tons on the waterside. Stack occupancy for breakbulk was recorded at 52% during that time and at 9% for containers, with 57 reefer plug points available. The terminal handled two container road slots and 17 breakbulk trucks containing 550 tons on the landside. During the same period, two cranes, eight reach stackers, one empty handler, eight forklifts and 20 ERFs were in operation. For most of the week, the terminal operated with one crane as two cranes were out of commission due to hook rotational issues. The second crane returned to service during the latter stages of the week, while the third crane is anticipated to return by the end of next week.

On Friday, the Ro-Ro terminal in Durban recorded two vessels on the berth, with zero at outer anchorage. Over the prior 24 hours, the terminal received 673 units and despatched 692 while handling 325 rail units. During the same period, general stack occupancy was recorded at 77%, with a composition of 36% for imports, 60% for exports, and 4% for transshipments. Stack occupancy at G-berth was recorded as low at 15% and high at 70% at Q/R. The terminal had 3 308 import units on hand, 5 494 units destined for export markets, and 391 units subject to transshipments.

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 08/09/2023.

iv. Richards Bay

On Thursday, Richards Bay recorded 12 vessels at anchor: five destined for DBT, three for MPT, three for RBCT, and one for liquid. The port also recorded 16 vessels on berth, translating to seven at DBT, six at MPT, three at RBCT, and none at the liquid bulk terminal. Two tugs, one pilot boat, and one helicopter were in operation for marine resources in the 24 hours leading up to Friday. The port helicopter returned to service earlier this week. However, it already made its journey to aid waterside operations in Durban on Thursday, picking up where it left off before the breakdowns occurred.

v. Eastern Cape ports

NCT on Wednesday recorded three vessels on the berth, of which one was on standby and four vessels at outer anchorage. Marine resources of two tugs, 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 29% for GP containers, 49% for reefers, and 66% for reefer ground slots. In that period, despite being operationally challenged, 1 568 TEUs were processed at a GCH of ~12 and SWH of ~26. Additionally, 422 reefers were handled, while 507 trucks were serviced on the landside at a truck turnaround time of ~37 minutes. Operational targets were not met at the terminal during this period due to several operational challenges. For example, the MSC Rayshmi was extensively challenged with loading reefers, while the lack of cell guides on the MSC Nitiya directly impacted the volumes handled across the quay.

GCT on Wednesday 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 Thursday. In the same period, stack occupancy was high, 82% for GP containers, 89% for reefers, and 58% for reefer ground slots. On the waterside, 941 TEUs and 205 reefers were handled across the quay at a GCH of ~19 and SWH of ~33. Additionally, 335 trucks were serviced on the landside at a truck turnaround time of ~33 minutes.

The Ro-Ro terminal had one vessel on berth and zero vessels at anchor on Wednesday. 1 420 units were handled across the quay on the waterside in the 24 hours before Thursday. Additionally, stack occupancy at the terminal was recorded at a figure of 55%.

On Thursday, the Port of East London had two vessels on berth and none at anchor. However, minimal operations occurred at the port due to adverse weather conditions. On the waterside, no containers were moved across the quay, but 90 external trucks were serviced on the landside at a truck turnaround time of ~7 minutes. Stack occupancy on the container side was recorded at 49%. During the same period, at the Ro-Ro terminal, 438 units were received, leading to a stack occupancy figure of 79%. 2 227 bulk tons were handled on the waterside at a TPH of ~215, while no RMTs were serviced on the landside.

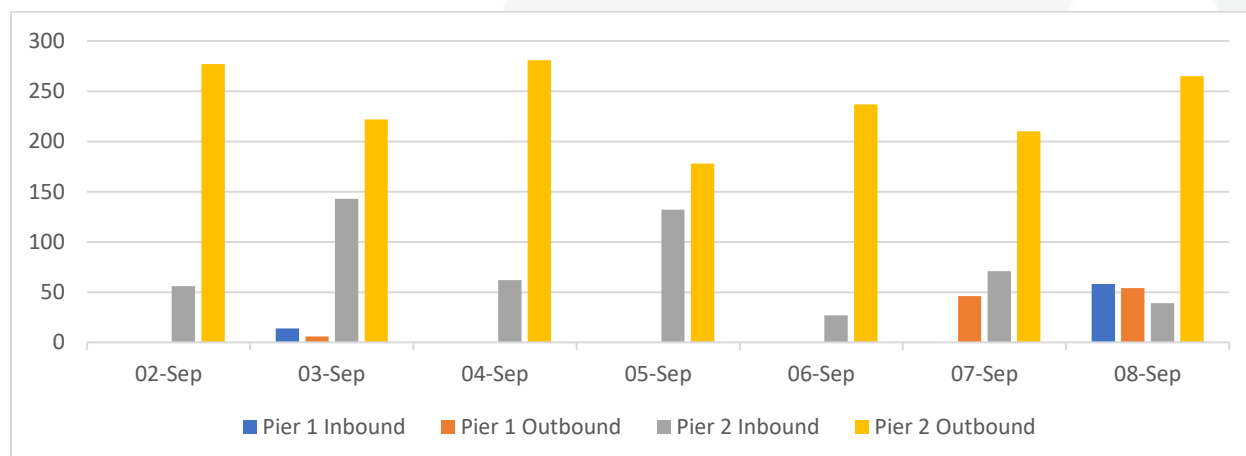
vi. Saldanha Bay

On Friday, the iron ore terminal had one vessel at anchorage and two vessels on the berth, while the multi-purpose terminal had two on the berth and one waiting at anchor. The vessels at anchor have been waiting outside for approximately 2-4 days, while those in the port have been on berth for between 1 and 4 days.

vii. Transnet Freight Rail (TFR)

More cable theft was experienced on our rail network towards the latter stages of the week, which delayed rail operations for approximately nine hours and prevented trains from departing from King's Rest. Additionally, on Thursday, DCTs Pier 2 had 534 ConCor units on hand with a dwell time of 36 hours (1,5 days) and 296 over-border units with a dwell time of 35 days.

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



Source: Calculated using data from Transnet, 2022. Updated 08/09/2023.

In the last week (2 to 8 September), rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **2 378** containers, up **↑8%** from the previous week's **2 194** containers.

viii. Load-shedding

As electricity generation by Eskom is under scrutiny again, Transnet reminded the industry that most ports remain exempt from load-shedding up to stage 8. However, they have warned that operational disruptions may occur as electricity generation is under increased pressure. Unfortunately, NCT and GCT are only exempted from load-shedding until stage 6 (TPT did not share any details on East London). Contingency measures at NCT include that the terminal has generator backup systems on all equipment and facilities except for the Ship-To-Shore and Rail Mounted Gantry cranes. Reefers also have a backup power supply. Conversely, no generator backup is currently available at GCT. Provisions have been made in the budget to

install reefer backup power in the 2024/25 financial period. Leasing gensets is another option, but that would require commercial alignment between Transnet and its customers.

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 28 August. For comparative purposes, the average air freight cargo (inbound and outbound) handled at ORTIA in August 2022 averaged **~701 602 kg** per day.

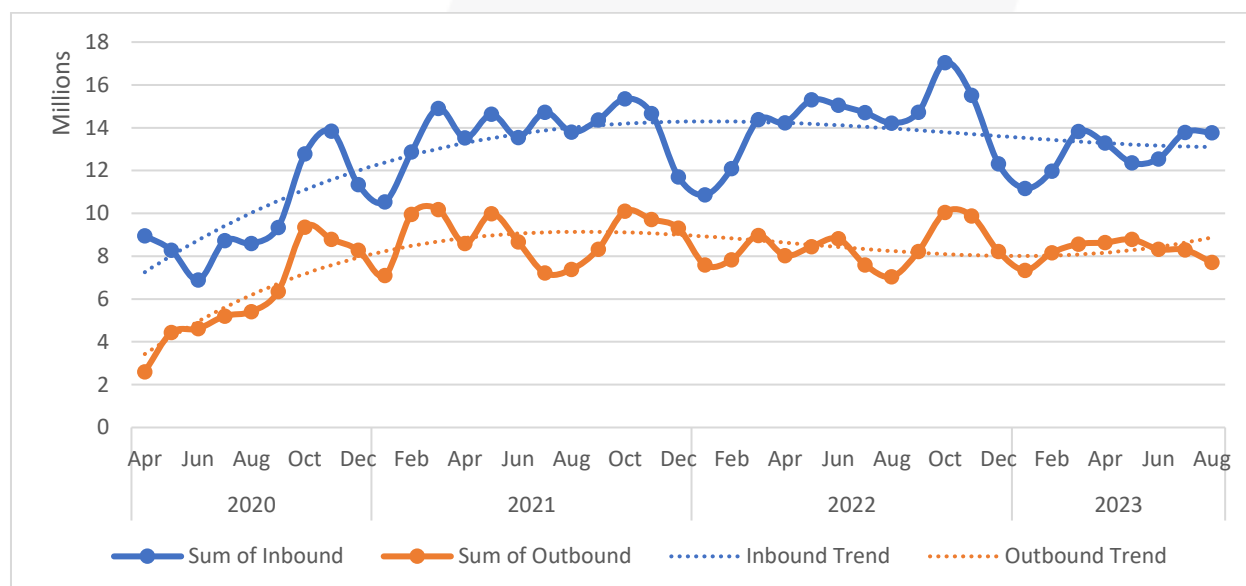
Table 4 – International inbound and outbound cargo from OR Tambo¹⁰

Flows	28-Aug	29-Aug	30-Aug	31-Aug	01-Sep	02-Sep	03-Sep	Week
Volume inbound	392 295	338 835	304 887	311 665	447 107	333 331	962 366	3 090 486
Volume outbound	245 851	243 154	230 062	210 739	240 400	217 145	623 096	2 010 447
Total	638 146	581 989	534 949	522 404	687 507	550 476	1 585 462	5 100 933

Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 05/09/2023.

The daily average volume of air cargo handled at ORTIA the previous week amounted to **441 498 kg** inbound (**↓8%**, w/w) and **287 207 kg** outbound (**↑1%**), resulting in an average of **728 705 kg per day** or around **~104%** compared with in August 2022. However, the level is currently at only **~74%** compared with the same period pre-pandemic in 2019 but continues to trend upwards. For August, total air import volumes were down by **↓3%** (y/y), but export volumes increased by a healthy **↑9%**, leaving total air cargo up by **↑1%**. Incidentally, passenger figures show that international flights are currently at **~89%** versus pre-pandemic levels, whilst domestic flights are at **~93%** for the week of 21 to 27 August. 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: 05/09/2023.

¹⁰ 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 *August 2022* was **~58 961 kg** per day.

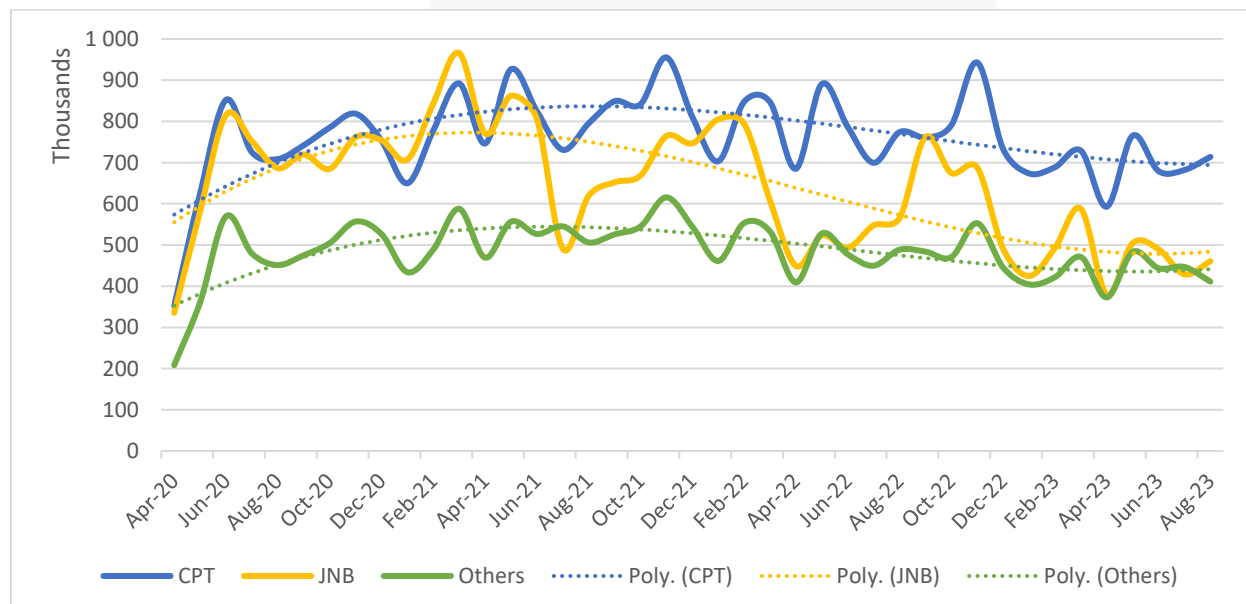
Table 5 – Total domestic inbound and outbound cargo (average daily)

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
28-Aug	35 070	3 521	3 749	24 500	9 976	4 245	81 063
29-Aug	38 746	3 889	5 267	27 834	10 500	4 506	90 742
30-Aug	37 144	3 852	4 060	22 372	9 997	3 524	80 949
31-Aug	41 635	3 772	3 548	20 442	9 304	3 379	82 080
01-Sep	14 401	3 365	1 996	10 025	3 944	2 445	36 176
02-Sep	1 600	523	367	592	211	38	3 331
03-Sep	822	335	189	334	865	473	3 017
Total for 2023:	5 525 618	662 975	641 568	3 769 008	1 503 176	647 533	12 749 878

Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 05/09/2023.

The average domestic air cargo moved last week was **~53 908 kg** per day, up by **↑7%** compared to the previous week and remains slightly down compared to last year's level (**~91%**). However, the level is currently at **~60%** compared with the same period pre-pandemic in 2019.

Figure 11 – Domestic inbound and outbound cargo (thousands)



Courtesy of ACOC. Updated: 05/09/2023.

3. National Update

a. Ctrack Transport and Freight Index

The Ctrack "Transport and Freight Index" (Ctrack TFI) fell to **120,8** in July 2023, marking a **↓1,2%** decline from the previous month and the second consecutive monthly contraction¹¹. The change reflects a loss of momentum in the logistics sector, with four out of six sub-sectors (rail, road, storage, and air freight) declining. However, sea freight showed strong growth – the contrast against the TNPA figures showing containers being down by **↓1%** and bulk cargoes being down by **↓6%**. Despite these monthly contractions, the Ctrack TFI remains **↑3,3%** higher annually in July, compared to **↑6,4%** in June, indicating ongoing challenges in the sector.

4. 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 controlled borders increased by **20 minutes**, averaging **~10,2 hours (↑3%, w/w)** for the week. In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) increased marginally and averaged **~8,1 hours (↑3%, w/w)**.
- DRC congestion will hopefully improve, as the Congolese Government has closed a truck park due to severe congestion, a move confirmed by FESARTA¹².
 - Cargo scanning at the Mutaka truck park was a significant reason for cross-border carrier delays in the DRC, costing \$100 for cargo scanning and an additional \$30 per day for waiting at the park. Before the park's closure, waiting times for cargo scanning at Mutaka were around eight days, further exacerbating congestion and delays.
 - The park's closure is a positive development for cross-border cargo transportation, facilitated by discussions between MOG Consulting and FESARTA with the Congolese Government. It is expected to alleviate congestion issues in the DRC and may pave the way for resolving similar problems at the Kasumbalesa Border Post.
- Elsewhere in the DRC, the closure of Mutaka has raised concerns about the Southbound queue.
 - However, the biggest challenge lies in fixing the Kasumbalesa border, where many MOUs with the DRC have yielded little progress.
- Beitbridge, in contrast, has again become the preferred border due to recent upgrades, with cargo clearing and crossing in under three hours and small vehicles in less than 40 minutes. However, these improvements are primarily on the Zimbabwean side.
- The Lebombo border continues to struggle to handle current volumes, as a video shows crowded TIP offices. Furthermore, the Lebombo WhatsApp group has restricted access, removing about 70% of users, citing non-affiliation with the Lebombo Transport Community.
- Lastly, an N3 road upgrade between the Westville viaduct and the Paradise Valley interchange, spanning **~6 km** and scheduled for completion over four years, potentially causing travel delays.

¹¹ Ctrack. 31/08/2023. [July 2023 Transport and Freight Index](#).

¹² Goddard, E. 04/09/2023. [Major DRC decongestion breakthrough following FESARTA intervention](#).

- 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](#)¹³, which arguably provides better and more reliable information.

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

Table 6 – Delays¹⁴ summary – South African borders (both directions)

Border Post	Direction	HGV ¹⁵ 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	0,4	5,3	12 390	2 891
Beitbridge	Zimbabwe-SA	387	4,4	5,1	20,5	11 610	2 709
Groblersbrug	SA-Botswana	235	4,3	3,2	11,4	7 050	1 645
Groblersbrug	Botswana-SA	148	3,6	2,2	13,5	4 440	1 036
Vioolsdrif	SA-Namibia	30	2,3	0,6	3,2	900	210
Noordoewer	Namibia-SA	20	1,3	1,4	5,4	600	140
Nakop	SA-Namibia	30	1,0	0,4	2,3	900	210
Ariamsvlei	Namibia-SA	20	0,6	0,4	2,4	600	140
Lebombo	SA-Mozambique	1 610	0,6	0,5	2,4	48 300	11 270
Ressano Garcia	Mozambique-SA	89	0,4	0,3	1,6	2 670	623
Skilpadshek	SA-Botswana	200	0,0	2,3	18,5	4 800	1 400
Pioneer Gate	Botswana-SA	100	0,0	0,3	1,5	2 400	700
Weighted Average/Sum		3 282	1,9	1,4	7,3	96 660	22 974

Source: TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 03/09/2023.

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	9,4	2,8	17,9	9 600	2 240
Dar Es Salaam Corridor	1 819	44,1	1,3	16,9	54 570	12 733
Maputo Corridor	1 699	4,4	1,8	8,4	50 970	11 893
Nacala Corridor	127	0,0	0,0	0,0	3 810	889
North/South	3 255	17,2	1,4	10,6	74 160	22 785
Trans Caprivi Corridor	116	0,0	0,6	3,7	3 480	812
Trans Cunene Corridor	100	0,0	0,0	0,0	3 000	700
Trans Kalahari Corridor	330	0,8	0,5	2,1	7 920	2 310
Trans Oranje Corridor	100	1,0	0,7	3,1	3 000	700
Weighted Average/Sum	7 866	13,7	1,1	8,4	210 510	55 062

Source: TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 03/09/2023.

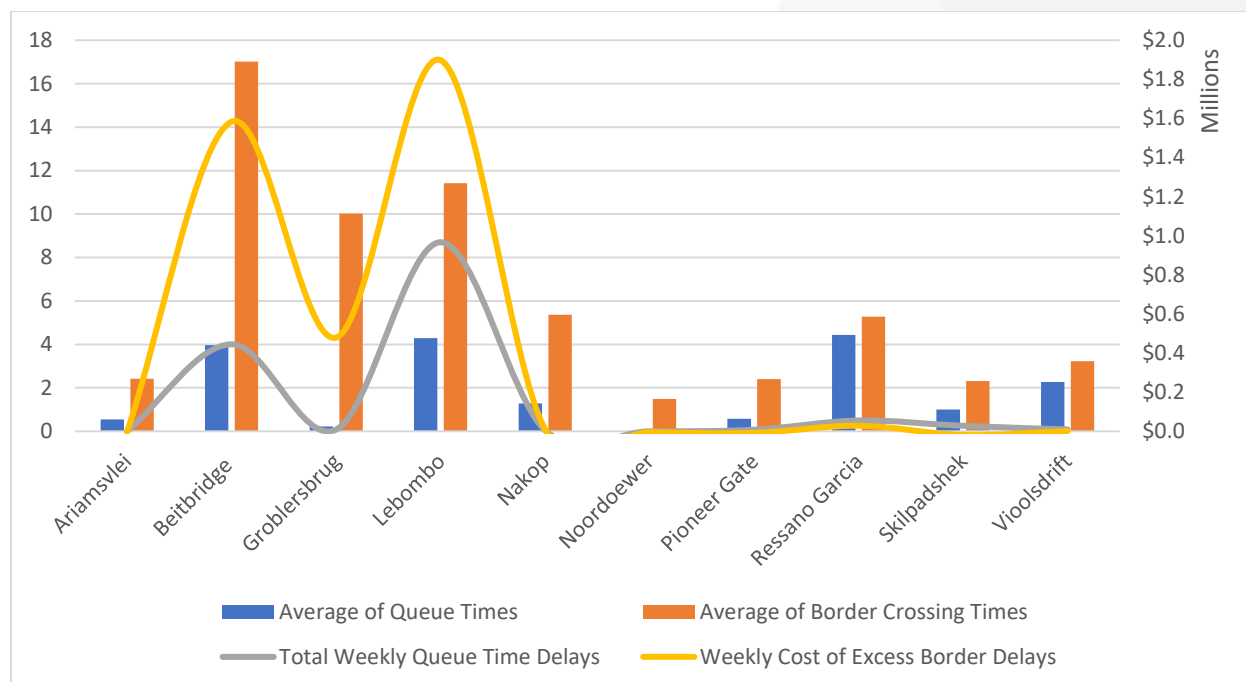
The following graph shows the weekly change in cross-border times and associated estimated costs:

¹³ [FESARTA TRANSIST Bureau](#).

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Heavy Goods Vehicles. Note: These statistics are rolling averages; therefore, they would not typically change weekly, rather monthly.

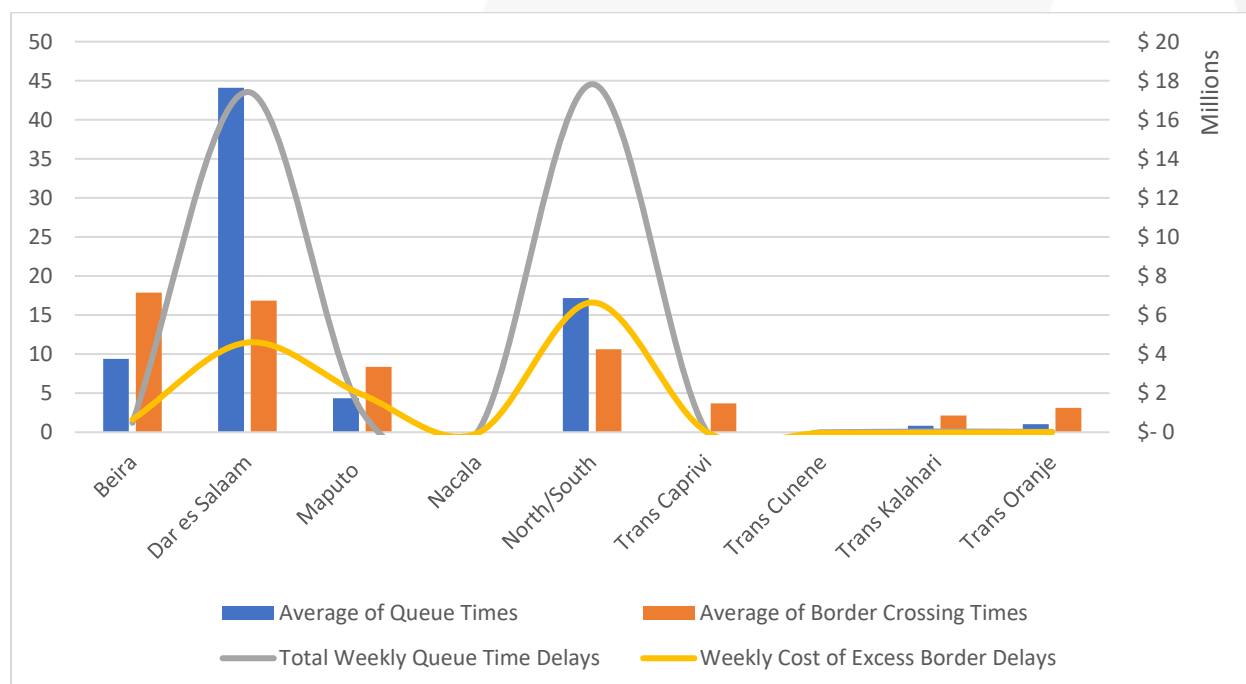
Figure 12 – Weekly cross-border delays & est. cost from a SA border perspective (hours & \$ millions¹⁶)



TLC, FESARTA, & Crickmay, week ending 03/09/2023.

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 03/09/2023.

¹⁶ 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** (down by **~0,5 hours** from the previous week's **~14,2 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **\$36,8 million (R712 million)**. Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times hovered around **~8,4 hours** (up by **~0,1 hours** from the **~8,3 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **\$13,7 million (R249 million)**. As a result, the total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~\$50,5 million (R966 million)**, up by **~R6 million** or **↑0,5%** from **R960 million** in the previous report).

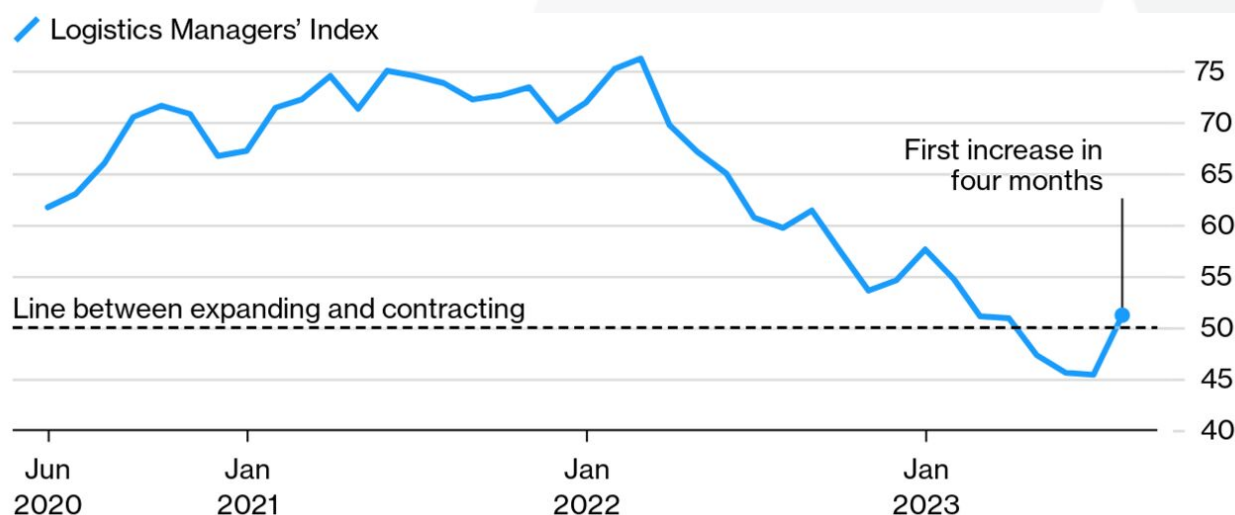
5. International Update

The following section provides some context around the global economy and its impact on trade, including an update on (a) the current state of international trade and supply chains, (b) the global shipping industry and (c) the global aviation industry.

a. The current state of international trade and global supply chains

After massive disruptions – followed by a slow decline – global supply chains are much closer to normal than at any time this year. Some of the high-frequency data continues to confirm the recovery, this time with the US "Logistics Managers' Index", which rose to **51,2** (from **45,4**) in August:

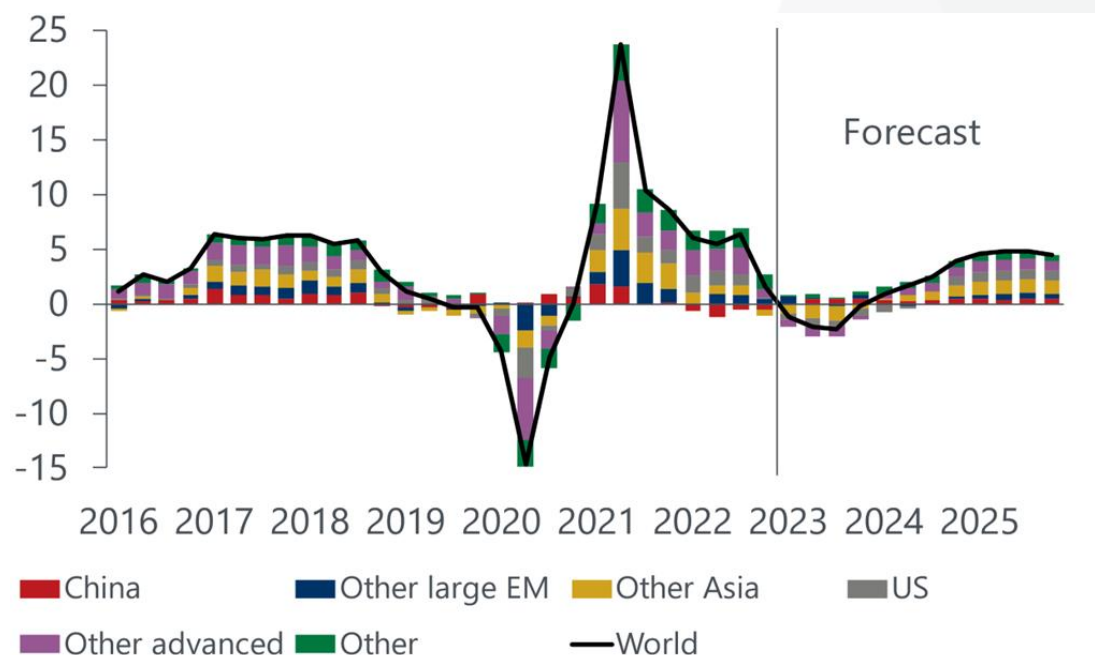
Figure 14 – US Logistics Managers' Index (50 = baseline)



Source: [LMI via Bloomberg](#)

After three months of contractions, all sub-indices increased in August. Inventories and transportation costs shrank slower, while warehouse use jumped, and inventory costs were elevated. The index warns that it is unclear whether the move back towards expansion is a one-off deviation from the previous contraction or represents a pivot back towards expansion. The slight increase (or stabilisation) in container throughput shown in the following section might provide an indication of what is to come. However, when looking further back, analysis by Oxford Economics shows that global trade has experienced a "mild recession" as shipments from China slumped and German factories experienced a decline. Collectively, Oxford Economics sees volumes dropping by **↓1,5%** this year before rebounding by **↑2,5%** in 2024:

Figure 15 – World goods trade volume by area (% contribution to annual growth in world trade)



Source: [Oxford Economics](https://www.oxfordeconomics.com)

Overseas shipments from China declined by $\downarrow 8,8\%$ in dollar terms compared to the previous year, while imports shrank by $\downarrow 7,3\%$, surpassing economists' predictions and showing improvement from July's downturn. These figures suggest some stabilisation in Chinese trade, whereas South Korea experienced a slower export decline in August. According to Oxford Economics, global goods trade volumes fell around $\downarrow 2\%$ last quarter, with leading indicators pointing to more weakness but a modest upturn in late 2023 and early 2024. The "shallow trade recession" starkly contrasts the World Trade Organisation's more optimistic forecast of projecting a $\uparrow 1,7\%$ growth in merchandise trade in 2023¹⁷. Meanwhile, the industrial output decline in Germany has raised significant concerns about a potential recession.

b. Global shipping industry

i. Global container port throughput

The latest container throughput figures for July from Container Trade Statistics (CTS) – an online statistics portal measuring global containerised trade – show that container volume has increased marginally by $\uparrow 0,1\%$ (m/m) this month after global volume decreased in June ($\downarrow 1,0\%$). The monthly throughput change is the same as the annual changes, and throughput is similar to last year's ($\uparrow 0,2\%$, y/y). Fortunately for shippers – similar to the index reported weekly by Drewry – the price index (reefer and dry) continued to moderate in July. It is down by another $\downarrow 5,1\%$ (m/m) and a considerable $\downarrow 62,9\%$ (y/y) versus a year ago. However, as we have seen with the more frequent data, global freight rates have stabilised since July. Nevertheless, the following figure illustrates the global container throughput and price index over the last 13 months:

¹⁷ WTO. 24/08/2023. [Goods barometer signals upturn in trade backed by strong auto demand](https://www.wto.org/press/2023/23-08-24.htm).

Figure 16 – Global Containerised Throughput (TEUs) and price index



Source: [CTS](#)

As illustrated, container throughput has stabilised in the last three months, with total throughput handling **15,1 million TEUs** in July. This figure is approximately similar to the same period last year. Concerning geographical disparity, most of the seven major sub-regions registered varying changes in volumes in July, with Sub-Saharan exports (up by **↑8,7%**, m/m) and Australasia and Oceania imports (as was the case last month – up by **↑5,2%**, m/m) showing the most significant changes. Elsewhere, Far East imports (**↓1,8%**) and exports (**↓1,0%**) decreased, which shows that "factory-China" has yet to make a positive turn in production and consumption terms (as outlined above), which will hopefully arrive by peak-season October. The following figure shows Sub-Saharan Africa imports and exports over the same period:

Figure 17 – Sub-Saharan Africa Containerised Throughput (TEUs)



Source: [CTS](#)

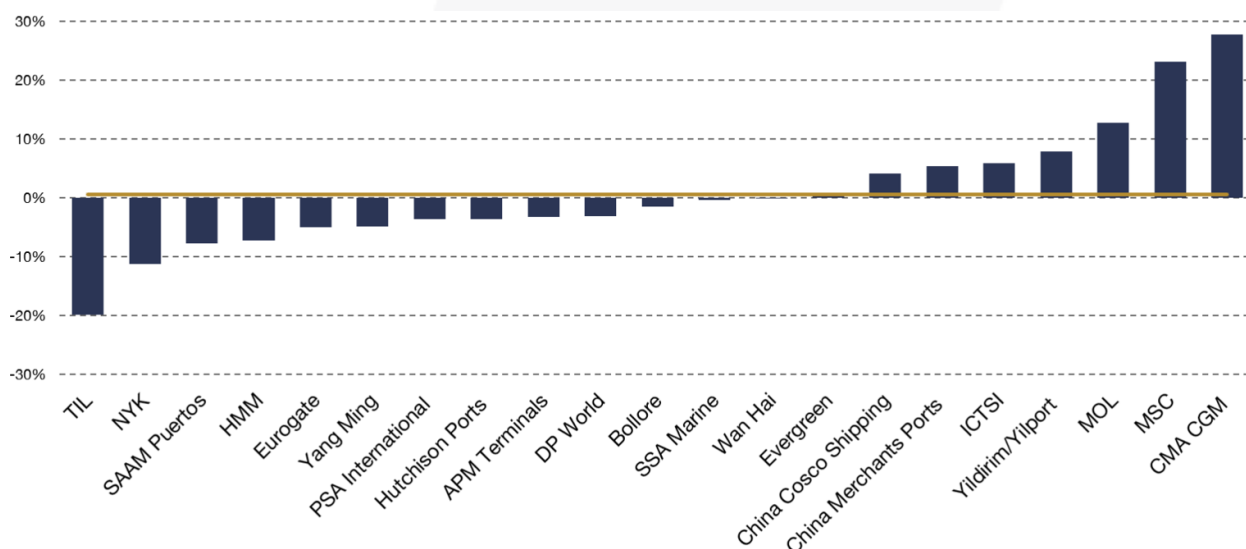
Sub-Saharan African trade shows increases in both exports (as mentioned above) and imports (up by **↑2,9%**) during July. Yearly trade shows that imports continue to grow (**↑7,9%**, y/y), while exports are approximately similar to July 2022 (up by a mere **↑0,1%**). Incidentally, South Africa accounted for **24%** of SSA imports and **59,1%** of SSA exports in July when measuring these versus TNPA figures. However, these metrics have steadily declined since our records began in 2021, showing that regional competition continues to gather steam, albeit gradually.

ii. Global port terminal performance

This week's Drewry webinar focused on global port terminal performance, noting the industry's growth, changes, and consolidations. With International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) winning the bid to operate the Durban Container Terminal in South Africa, the transport and logistics industry in South Africa is eagerly waiting for performance improvements in a space which has continued to lag recently. Indeed, container throughput is similar to 2013 levels, bulk volumes similar to 2015, and vehicle exports akin to 2011. One might argue that ports cannot "create" throughput; they can only handle it. However, the long-term performance metrics have also been downward, with GCH peaking in 2017 at **25,39** (**↓9,3%** below the target of **28**) and decreasing to **17,4** in 2022 (**↓37,9%** below target). SWH peaked in 2015 at **59,28** (**↑7,8%** above the target of **55**) but decreased to **41,82** in 2022 (**↓24%** below target). Vessel dwell times have also trended in a negative direction, with PTT peaking in 2015 at **72,28** (still **↑81%** above the target of **40**) and increased to **167,4** in 2022 (**↑319%** above target) –nearly a week.

With the ongoing equipment availability crisis exacerbating the current situation, the outlook is getting bleaker by the day, demanding an emergency turnaround. We simply cannot wait until April next year, when ICTSI will take over before the issues are resolved. Although the 25-year joint venture with Transnet is a necessary step in the evolution and part of a long-planned program to modernise the country's port operations, the current situation must be overturned. Hopefully, one of the world's biggest container terminal operators – as illustrated below – is set to improve the situation:

Figure 18 – Global Terminal Operators, equity-adjusted throughput growth (% , 2022)

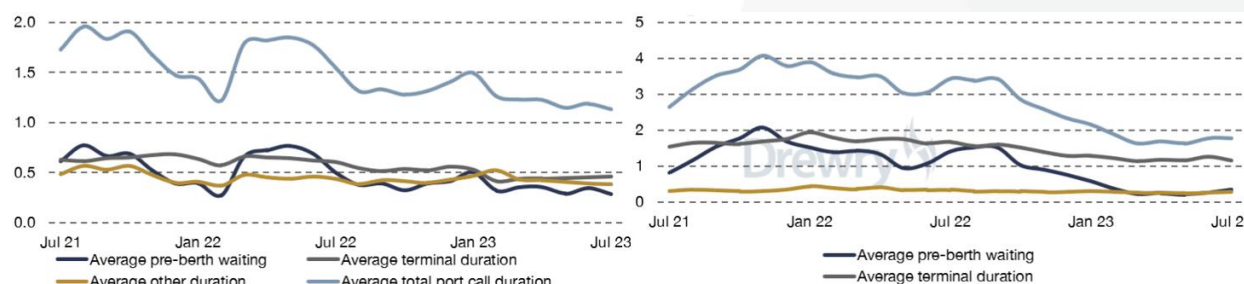


Source: [Drewry](https://www.drewry.com/)

As illustrated, ICTSI was among the top five largest growing Global Terminal Operators (GTOs) in 2022. Nevertheless, the growth is dwarfed by the aggressive market strategies of several shipping lines – notably

MSC (↑24%) and CMA CGM (↑28%) – armed with massive balance sheets after record freight rates. Indeed, the vertical integration is continuing as global conditions have returned to more "normal" conditions:

Figure 19 – Average port call duration/port call index – Greater China (left) & North America (right), (days)



Source: [Drewry](https://www.drewry.com)

The underlying metrics for improved conditions can be summarised as follows:

- Global container port throughput on a rolling four-quarter basis is now stable at **↑0,2%**; however, the forecast for 2023 has been downgraded to **↑0,3%** – Africa at around **↑1,8%**
- On the financial side, average revenue per unit has stabilised in the second quarter. However, GTOs are still projected to make a loss this year at **↓5,0%** because of suppressed demand and the prevailing global economic conditions typified by inflation, low growth, and geo-political uncertainty.

iii. Global container industry summary

Asia Europe rates were severely battered due to continued capacity pressure, with three ULCS units delivered over the past week alone as the pace of new-building deliveries is maintained at just below the 200 000 TEU level in August with few signs of capacity discipline as scrapping activity remains muted while the idle fleet remains stubbornly low at just **0,5%** of the fleet as if no carrier wants to extend its hand too far. And the result is that carriers are forced to idle new ULCVs as soon as they are delivered¹⁸.

Some form of capacity management will have to be implemented, as the prevailing market conditions of oversupply, low seasonal demand, and economic uncertainty will undoubtedly exert pressure, allowing little room for manipulating freight rates. Rates will come under increasing pressure through September (as seen below), with transpacific carriers withdrawing peak season surcharges even before the Golden Week holidays in October. Belated attempts to blank sailings from the end of September will do little to address the imbalance in the absence of concrete service withdrawals. However, right on queue, Drewry's "Cancelled Sailings Tracker" has increased significantly, doubling to a **14% cancellation rate**¹⁹ this week, with more blankings expected on the "difficult" and "sensitive" transatlantic routes²⁰.

Port congestion continues to be low (at **1,59 million TEU**) and concentrated in some areas, notably South Africa. Besides some of the busiest container terminals (such as Shanghai, Busan, and New York), three South African ports are listed in the top 20 most congested – Durban, Cape Town, and the dual Eastern Cape ports²¹. Lastly, some interesting analysis from Alphaliner shows how the size of container ships per trade has changed in the last five years:

¹⁸ Wackett, M. 06/09/2023. [Carriers forced to idle new ULCVs as soon as they are delivered](https://www.drewry.com).

¹⁹ Drewry. 01/09/2023. [Cancelled Sailings Tracker - 8 September](https://www.drewry.com).

²⁰ Van Marle, G. 08/09/2023. [Expect more blankings on the 'difficult' and 'sensitive' transatlantic trades](https://www.drewry.com).

²¹ Note: Gqeberha – and Ngqura Container Terminals are grouped together as "Port Elizabeth" by Linerlytica.

Figure 20 – Average size and growth of cellular ships per trade area (August 2023)



Source: Alphaliner

Far East-North America trade sees a significant increase in ship size, as the average size of cellular container ship per trade route has witnessed the most vigorous growth in the past five years on the Far East-North America trade (**↑17%**) and in Africa-related services (**↑17,5%**). The growth in Africa is curious, especially given the limited ability of African ports to handle larger vessels. Can we really be surprised when no material containerised growth has occurred since 2009? A South African ports revolution is desperately needed.

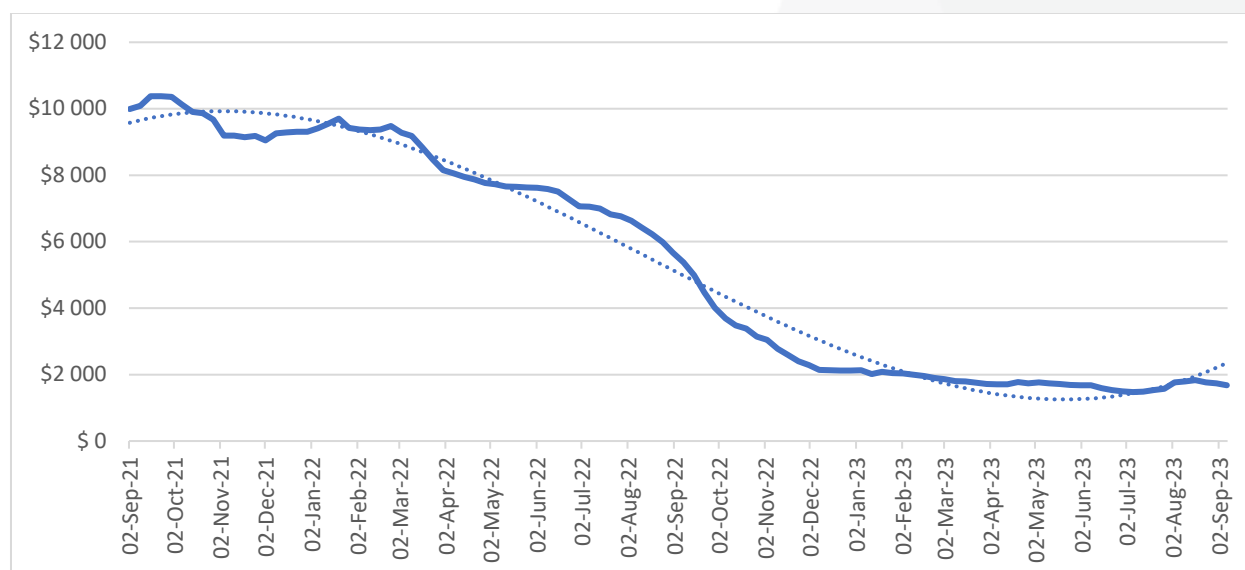
iv. Global container freight rates

Some trade lanes' freight rates have rebounded slightly following the 1 September rate increase applied to trades from Asia to the US, Australia, and India/Middle East. However, the gains are reversing as quickly as they are applied with carriers offering rate discounts²². Nevertheless, the market saw a collective decline again this week, as the "World Container Index" decreased by **↓3,4%** (or **\$59**) to **\$1 681** per 40-ft container this week²³:

²² Linerlytica. 04/09/2023. [Market Pulse – Week 36](https://www.linerlytica.com/Market-Pulse-Week-36).

²³ Drewry. 07/09/2023. [World Container Index – 7 September 2023](https://www.drewry.com/World-Container-Index-7-September-2023).

Figure 21 – World Container Index assessed by Drewry (last two years, \$ per 40 ft. container)



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

The most significant changes came on the ex-China routes, as all rates (including the composite index at **↓69%**) are at least down by **↓50%** versus the corresponding period last year. On the financial data, the last of the second quarter earnings from publicly-traded carriers have rolled in this week, which sees some positive returns for some. Despite weaker revenue and freight rates, OOCL and COSCO jumped to the top of the carriers' earnings table with their outsized second-quarter earnings²⁴. OOCL and COSCO's EBIT margins at **↑31,8%** and **↑24,8%** are more than three times higher than the average of the next eight carriers, which stand at just **↑6,7%**.

v. Further developments of note

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

1. No sign of resumption of Black Sea shipping pact:

- Despite Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's efforts, Russia has not renewed the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which expired in July²⁵.
- During a meeting with President Vladimir Putin in Sochi, Erdogan sought the resumption of Black Sea grain exports but faced Putin's insistence on Western concessions for a renewed shipping pact.
- Instead, Russia expressed readiness to collaborate with Qatar and Turkey in transporting grains to African nations, working on agreements with six African states.
- Tensions in the Black Sea region have escalated since Russia departed from the UN-backed shipping pact, impacting Ukrainian grain exports and port facilities.
- Elsewhere, operators of Russia-bound container shipping services continue to expand their service offerings from China despite the recent downward pressure on rates²⁶.

2. Bolloré Logistics may see its brand disappear:

- Bolloré Logistics may see its brand disappear as it nears the final stages of a **€4,65 billion** acquisition by CMA CGM Group. The deal awaits antitrust and foreign investment clearances in relevant jurisdictions²⁷.

²⁴ HJ. 05/09/2023. [COSCO, OOCL and Wan Hai reverse earnings decline](#).

²⁵ Chambers, S. 05/09/2023. [No sign of resumption of Black Sea shipping pact](#).

²⁶ Li, M. 05/09/2023. [China-Russia box trade still expanding despite falling rates](#).

²⁷ Toood, S. 04/09/2023. [Jobs safe in CMA CGM takeover, says Bolloré, but we may lose our brand](#).

- b. CMA CGM's logistics activities, centred on CEVA and Bolloré Logistics, would generate approximately **\$24 billion** in revenue based on 2022 results, becoming one of the world's top-five global logistics firms.
- c. Questions arise regarding duplication and overlap of activities, potential job cuts, and the fate of the Bolloré brand, which remains uncertain. Regulatory approval is still pending, and both companies assert complementarity in skills and networks.

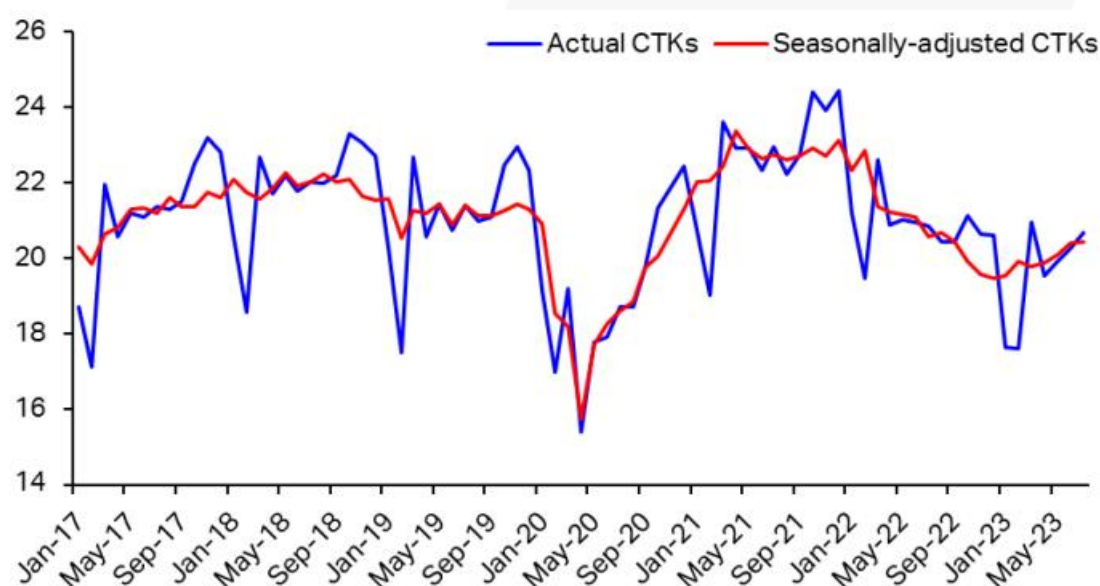
3. HMM service expansion 'not connected' to impending sale:

- a. HMM is expanding its business operations and container shipping routes from South Korea's Gwangyang port ahead of its impending sale. Last month, it launched a Far East Asia, India, and Mediterranean service based in Gwangyang and plans to add more routes connected to the port²⁸.
- b. HMM aims to strengthen its presence in the shipping industry, even as its major shareholders seek a buyer for their stake. Additionally, HMM is participating in the bidding process for South Korean dry bulk shipping company Polaris Shipping.

c. Global air cargo industry

IATA released its latest "Air Cargo Market Analysis " on Thursday²⁹, showing that industry air cargo demand decreased by **↓0,8%** (y/y) in July. The change currently reflects the sustained improvement in cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs):

Figure 22 – International CTKs (in millions)



Source: [IATA](https://www.iata.org)

Other highlights from the latest analysis show:

- Air cargo capacity, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres (ACTKs), increased by **↑11,2%**, primarily due to the continued restoration of belly cargo capacity during the summer.




















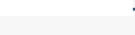
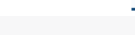
²⁸ Li, M. 06/09/2023. [HMM service expansion 'not connected' to impending sale.](https://www.saaff.org.za)

²⁹ IATA. 31/08/2023. [Air Transport Chartbook – Q2 2023.](https://www.iata.org)

- In July, both manufacturing output PMI (**49,0**) and new export orders PMI (**46,4**) – two leading indicators of global air cargo demand – were below the threshold (50), indicating a decline in global manufacturing production and exports.

In the more frequent data from World ACD, global tonnages dropped by **↓3%** at the end of August and the beginning of September, following a similar pattern to last year. Indeed, the annual decline narrowed slightly, broadly aligned with the IATA analysis above. Rates are still stable and trading at **\$2,29 per kg**.

Figure 23 – 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%		+5%	-0%		-0%	-14%
Asia Pacific		+0%	+23%		+2%	-0%		+1%	-42%
C. & S. America		-0%	-7%		+3%	-1%		-1%	-14%
Europe		+0%	+8%		-1%	-13%		-1%	-34%
M. East & S. Asia		-1%	+9%		+4%	+1%		+1%	-37%
North America		-1%	+4%		-4%	-20%		+0%	-27%
Worldwide		-1%	+8%		+1%	-7%		+0%	-35%

Source: [World ACD](#)

In weeks 34 and 35, global shipping tonnages increased by **↑1%** compared to weeks 32 and 33, but worldwide rates remained stable, with a slight **↓1%** capacity decrease. Notably, North America saw a **↓4%** decrease in tonnages due to a steep **↓11%** drop in shipments to Asia Pacific. Other regional flows remained stable or increased, such as the Middle East and South Asia to Asia Pacific (**↑10%**) and Europe (**↑6%**). Pricing mostly remained unchanged, except for drops in the Middle East and South Asia to Asia Pacific (**↓6%**) and Europe to Central and South America (**↓5%**), while North America to Asia Pacific showed a positive trend (**↑5%**). Annually, global chargeable weight decreased by **↓7%**, with significant drops in North America (**↓20%**) and Europe (**↓13%**), while capacity increased notably in the Asia Pacific (**↑23%**). Global rates were **↓35%** lower than last year but **↑34%** higher than pre-pandemic levels.

ENDS³⁰

³⁰ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

*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 \(AGL\)](#).*