

Port of Walvis Bay: committed to being the gateway to Southern Africa

Namport, Walvis Bay, Namibia

Strategically located half way down the coast of Namibia, with direct access to principal shipping routes, Walvis Bay is a natural gateway for international trade.

Walvis Bay is Namibia's largest commercial port, receiving approximately 3,000 vessel calls each year and handling about three million tonnes of cargo. It is a sheltered deepwater harbour benefiting from a temperate climate. Fortunately, no delays are caused by bad weather.

In order to deal with even higher levels of throughput, Namport have steadily improved its cargo-handling facilities, and remains committed to infrastructure development.

Container terminal & equipment

The container terminal at the port of Walvis Bay can accommodate ground slots for 3,875 containers with provision for 424 reefer container plug points. The technical services division, Namtech, provides reefer repair services at the port.

Namport uses a General Containerised Operating System, which enables the Container Terminal to render an efficient and streamlined service to our clients. The system computerises aspects such as gate control, ship to shore operations and container yard planning. In addition, clients can arrange remote access to the system.

The container terminal can host about 150,000 containers per annum, therefore various business development opportunities are being undertaken to facilitate imports and export containers at this port.

The arrival of the port's fifth mobile harbour crane coincided strategically with the Port Expansion plan and vision to be the first-choice world-class service provider in Africa. The port can now attract ungeared ships, broadening the market scope of the port tremendously.

The marine equipment has been enhanced with the acquisition of its second larger tug (over 30 bollard pull). The fleet also includes two medium sized tugs and two smaller tugs which are being used for launching services.

Infrastructure upgrades

Continuous efforts are in place to upgrade existing infrastructure to ensure high service levels to clients at all times.

Deepening of the port: This project represents an investment of some N\$50 million. The area of Berths 1, 2 and 3, the turning basin and the approach channel are now at a depth of 12.8 metres. From Berths 4 to 8, the depth is 10.6 metres.

Pelican Point Lighthouse: The Pelican Point Lighthouse has been fully automated and the lighthouse personnel transferred to other departments within Namport.

Strategic benefits – why use the Port of Walvis Bay?

- The Port of Walvis Bay is a secure, efficient, world-class port.
- The turnaround time is competitive, with handling times for container vessels of around 12 to 15 hours. Depending on the tonnage and shipment, the turnaround time for bulk vessels averages between 24 and 48 hours, while for break-bulk vessels it averages between 18 and 20 hours.
- The Port of Walvis Bay is a congestion-free port with minimum delays. The port currently handles 3 million tonnes and operates at 65 per cent of its capacity. Its total capacity equips it to handle 7 to 8 million tonnes of cargo.





- The Port of Walvis Bay prides itself on having the flexibility to deliver an increasing demand for customer services.
- The port has world-class infrastructure and equipment, ensuring reliable and safe cargo handling.
- Temperate weather conditions are experienced all year round and no delays are caused by the weather.
- The port has introduced maximum-security measures and procedures and is International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code compliant.
- Deep-water anchorage is available inside the harbour, and is protected by the natural bay and by Namport.
- The port carries a low risk in respect of insurance, with no pilferage.
- The routes managed by the Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG) make access to the hinterland easy and fast (see the section on the WBCG).
- The Gauteng market can be reached via the Trans-Kalahari Corridor instead of going via Durban or Cape Town, saving 7 to 11 days of transit time.
- Major shipping lines are served with a new trade route – South America.
- Transit time from Antwerp to the Port of Walvis Bay is 17 days, and transshipment from the Port of Walvis Bay to Gauteng an additional 48 hours.
- The port offers a thriving Syncrolift ship repair facility.

Walvis Bay Port details

As a multifunction harbour, the Port of Walvis Bay can offer a range of specialised berthing facilities and every kind of support facility. An important new addition is the purpose-built container terminal, covering 3.2 hectares.

Location

GPS coordinates S22°56'08" E014°29'07".

Pilotage

The port is a compulsory pilotage area. Requests for pilots need to be directed to the Port Captain prior to arrival.

WBCG

The opening of a Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG) office in Gauteng, further strengthens the ports position to operate as a regional port of choice. Cargo through the corridors is increasing as years of dedicated marketing efforts in landlocked countries are starting to bear fruits.

The WBCG, which represents all of the public and private stakeholders in the transport sector, has to be continually supported and grown, as this is Namibia's footprint into SADC.

The private sector of the industry has also shown a distinct increase in business volumes year on year, reflecting the overall

growth in the Namibian economy. Mining activities, particularly in the Erongo region, contributed substantially to the growth in port throughput. The increased throughput volumes have increased the pressure on port services and the personnel are to be commended for their commitment to uphold service efficiencies levels.

For the first time in a number of years the port of Luderitz has shown an operating profit. This achievement is especially remarkable considering the depressed state of the southern economy. The port is deprived of a rail link that is crucial for port operations and growth, and the fishing industry has not yet recovered from its recession. The main contributor to its profitability is the containerisation and export of zinc products and import of sulphur for the mining industry.

Growth

In the 2007/8 financial year, Namport handled 4.7 million tonnes of cargo, 11 per cent more than the previous financial year. The growth can largely be attributed to an increase in economic activities in Namibia, particularly the mining sector in the Erongo region, and a sharp increase in cross-border cargo to neighbouring countries. Even more impressive is an increase of 24 per cent in the number of containers handled for the year. Whilst the majority of containers handled are transshipment containers, it is particularly pleasing to note that import containers grew by 49 per cent last year and export containers by 30 per cent.

In contrast, the number of vessel visits increased by 5 per cent only, reflecting the trend of ever-increasing vessel sizes.

Strategic direction

A shortage of land for port expansion dominates the planning for new facilities to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for port services facilities. The only option is to develop terminals on reclaimed land from the sea. At the forefront of these strategic initiatives is a feasible, but costly port development and modernisation plan for the port of Walvis Bay. In 2008, the port expanded its seven-year master plan to facilitate growth for decades to come. Various short-term initiatives were embarked on however, to cater for intermediate demands and short-term growth.

This port expansion plan is critical to the continued realisation of the strategy of being the first-choice gateway port to Southern Africa. Appropriate equipment and personnel are essential for handling cargo at the required efficiency levels, and Namport has made contingency plans for increasing cargo handling equipment and training/recruiting personnel as the need requires, bearing in mind the time frame required for purchasing and receiving this equipment as well as the training of personnel.

ENQUIRIES

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