

# TNPA: Five Tugs Done, Four More to Go



***Transnet National Ports Authority's (TNPA) R1.4 billion tug building contract in Durban continues to create jobs and develop local marine capabilities, with the fifth of the authority's nine new tugs launched this morning in Durban.***

The project is now 81% complete and still on track to deliver the ninth and final tug early in 2018, on time and within budget. Five tugs are under construction at any given time at the premises of contractor, Southern African Shipyards. Four are already delivered and at work in Port Elizabeth and Saldanha.

The new tug – named UKHOZI – will serve at the Port of [Richards Bay](#). She is Kwa-Zulu Natal's first new tug among four planned for the province's ports. Richards Bay is expecting another of these relatively small but powerful vessels used to guide visiting ships safely into port by pushing or towing them, while Durban will also receive two.

In line with maritime tradition, the duty of christening the vessel was carried out by Lady Sponsor, Sagree Chetty, TNPA's General Manager: Legal, Risk, Compliance and Regulatory.

Speaking at the ceremony, TNPA Chief Executive, Richard Vallihu, acknowledged that it was essential to have well-trained people in place to support Transnet's major drive to ramp up infrastructure and efficiency at South Africa's ports. Transnet has set aside a record-breaking R7,7 billion for training over the next 10 years. The port authority will contribute in excess of R56 billion of capital expenditure under Transnet's rolling R300 billion-plus Market Demand Strategy, or MDS, which is now in its fifth year.

Vallihu noted the stories of three newly qualified Chief Marine Engineering Officers in the Port of Durban who were among a group of engineers who had the opportunity to hone their practical skills on-site during the construction of several of the tugs. They are now responsible for upholding the mechanical integrity of the port's fleet of tugs.

The men – Prince Zulu, Mlungisi Ngema and Ntuthuko Tshabalala – are part of an ambitious skills development programme to beef up marine resources and to support the Port of Durban's transition from a four-tug to a six-tug operation in the near future.

"The sheer scale of this construction and engineering project has equipped these promising marine engineers with the technical problem-solving insight that would be hard to come by elsewhere," said Vallihu.

"Prince Zulu, for example, is a young man from the landlocked village of Nongoma in Northern KZN. He is a product of the Transnet Maritime School of Excellence and gained valuable work experience over 12 months during this contract. He was able

to observe and participate in the construction of at least two of the nine tugs. This exposure has helped him remain abreast of cutting-edge technology and has enabled him to tackle the many challenges entailed in overseeing the mechanical operation of these complex pieces of [machinery](#)," said Vallihu.

Vallihu again praised the work of Southern African Shipyards, which he said was playing a proactive role in helping to unlock the potential of the Ocean Economy.

According to Southern African Shipyards CEO, Prasheen Maharaj, the launch of this the fifth tug, again, within time and budget, has demonstrated clearly that South Africa has the capabilities to deliver world-class services locally.

"The concerted efforts by TNPA and other State entities to promote localisation must be commended. It is only when we boost our own economy, that will we be able to address the current scourge of unemployment our youth face. The Maritime Sector and Operation Phakisa specifically serves as a beacon of hope for millions of South Africans," he said.

Maharaj concluded that Southern African Shipyards would remain proud of this, the largest contract to be awarded to any single company by TNPA for the building of harbor craft, and looked forward to seeing the other four tugs off with equal delight.

The nine tugs are being built over three and a half years, as part of a wider fleet replacement programme that also includes new dredging vessels and new marine aviation helicopters. The programme is aimed at improving operational efficiency in the ports.

TNPA's new fleet of nine tugs are each 31 metres long with a 70 ton bollard pull. They feature the latest global technology such as Voith Schneider propulsion which makes them highly manoeuvrable.

Vallihu said UKHOZI and others in the new fleet would aid South African ports as they continued to service bigger commercial vessels more frequently.

UKHOZI was named through a competition hosted amongst TNPA employees at the Port of Richards Bay. Both Delville Robertze, 2nd Engineer, and Sinamile Zuma, Customer Relations Manager, recommended the winning name which represents the isiZulu word for eagle.

The moniker is in keeping with the port's tradition of naming its marine fleet after treasured [South African birds](#) and the powerful new UKHOZI will serve alongside older tugs in the port such as INDWE (blue crane). Robertze said he suggested UKHOZI because an eagle is able to sense danger from a distance, as tugs are required to do.

**Credit: [MarineLink](#)**