



Date: 3 November 2024

Key Notes

- An average of **~11 046 TEUs** was handled per day, with **~11 302 TEUs** projected for next week.
- Rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **2 818** containers, down **↓21%** from last week.
- Cross-border queue: **↑0,6 hrs**; transit: **↑0,5 hrs**; SA borders: **14,1 hrs (↑4%)**; SADC: **4,5 hrs (↑13%)**.
- SARS September trade stats – exports: **↑3,5% (m/m)**; imports **↓1,3%**; YTD trade surplus: **R100,4 billion**.

i. Port operations - General

- In our container terminals, an average of **11 046 TEUs** was handled per day, up compared to the **10 691 TEUs** last week.
- Port operations were mainly constrained by poor weather conditions, congestion, and equipment breakdowns and shortages.
 - Approximately 40 operational hours were lost in Cape Town this week due to adverse weather, while continuous equipment breakdowns and shortages, accompanied by adverse weather, ensured operational disruptions in Durban.
 - Several vessel movements were delayed at the Port of Richards Bay due to bad weather, while poor weather conditions prevented optimal operational performance at our Eastern Cape Ports.
 - Due to the adverse weather experienced at the Port of PE over the most recent fortnight, the Santa Rita/244S and ONE Resilience/244S will call Cape Town southbound to discharge Cape Town imports before calling Port Elizabeth (Coega).
 - Furthermore, minimal reports were received from TFR this week.

ii. Port operations – Performance metrics

- CTCT stack occupancy for **GP containers** was recorded at **23%**, **reefers** at **7%**, and **empties** at **18%**.
 - Additionally, the terminal operated with **eight STS cranes**, **23 RTGs**, and **54 hauliers** towards the end of the week.
 - At midday on Friday, there was **one container** vessel at inner anchorage in Cape Town.
- CTCT handled a very low **~1 482 TEUs (↓27%, w/w)** containers a day. A much improved average of **~2 317 (↑56%)** is projected this week.
- DCT Pier 1: Stack occupancy was **59%** for **GP containers**.
 - The terminal operated with **five STS cranes** for most of the week and had **14 RTGs** in service towards the end of the week
 - Strong winds impacted waterside operations at the terminal this week, while transporters doing dual transactions caused some operational delays on the landside.
- DCT Pier 1 handled **~1 818 TEUs (↓8%, w/w)** containers a day, with a slightly decreased average of **~1 645 TEUs (↓10%)** projected this week.
 - Average TTT for DCT Pier 1 this week: **93 minutes (↓26%, w/w)**, with staging time decreasing – to **58 minutes (↓49%, w/w)**.
- DCT Pier 2: Stack occupancy was at **56%** for **GP containers**.
 - The terminal operated with **ten gangs** on the waterside.
 - The number of available straddle carriers fluctuated between **48** and **51** out of a fleet complement of **88** this week.
 - Thus, the availability figure sat roughly at **57%** during this period.



- DCT Pier 2 handled an increased average of **~4 668 TEUs (↑27%, w/w)** containers a day, with a similar average of **~4 507 TEUs (↓3%)** projected this week.
 - Average TTT for DCT Pier 2 increased this week: **111 minutes (↓3%, w/w)**, with staging time again increasing significantly – to **151 minutes (↓29%, w/w)**.
- At midday on Friday, **three** vessels were waiting for Pier 2, **three** for Pier 1, and **none** for Point terminal, with a current estimation of **at least four additional days added to the schedules** (another slight reduction from last week).
- South Africa's other container terminals produced the following results for the week:
 - Ngqura Container Terminal handled an increased average of **~1 538 TEUs (↑23%, w/w)** containers a day, with an increased average of **~1 913 TEUs (↑24%)** projected this week.
 - Port Elizabeth Container Terminal handled a decreased average of **~325 TEUs (↓37%, w/w)** containers a day, with a similar average of **~281 TEUs (↓24%)** projected this week.
 - Other terminals handled a combined average of **~1 215 TEUs (↑14%, w/w)**, with an average of **640 TEUs (↓123%)** projected this week.
- The Richards Bay Coal Terminal handled a low average of around **110 961 tons (↓34%, w/w)** for the week.
- In the last week (28 October to 3 November), rail cargo handled out of Durban was reported at **2 818** containers, down by **↓21%** from the previous week's **3 784** containers.

iii. SARS Merchandise Trade Statistics: September

- SARS released its latest "*Merchandise Trade Statistics*" for September¹, showing a preliminary monthly trade surplus of **R12,8 billion**.
 - Monthly trade indicates that exports increased by **↑3,5%** from August (m/m), while imports decreased by **↓1,3%** (m/m).
- The YTD figures reveal a trade surplus of **R100,4 billion**, a significant improvement from the **R60,4 billion** surplus recorded in 2023.
- Annually, export flows for September 2024 were **R170,7 billion** and **↓1,6%** (y/y) lower than in September 2023, while import flows were slightly higher by **↑0,1%**, increasing from **R157,8 billion** to **R157,9 billion** in the current period.
- Regionally, trade with BELN countries for September resulted in a trade surplus of **R11,0 billion**, derived from exports of **R17,0 billion** and imports of **R6,0 billion**.

iv. Local and cross-border road:

- The median border crossing times at South African borders increased by **half an hour**, averaging **14,1 hrs (↑4%, w/w)** for the week.
- In contrast, the greater SADC region (excluding South African controlled) also increased by around **half an hour** and averaged **~4,5 hrs (↑13%, w/w)**.
- **Skilpadshek Border delays:**
 - Transporters faced extended waiting times, with 16-24 hours queues. Drivers were reminded of the necessity of carrying completed documentation to avoid adding to delays.
 - Following discussions with SARS, stricter penalties will now be enforced for non-compliance, and a new rule prohibits vehicles from entering the 10km border zone without a "proceed to Border" authorisation.

¹ SARS. 31/10/2024. [Trade Statistics: September 2024](#).



- In light of the delays at Skilpadshek, Nakop was suggested as an alternative route operating 24 hours a day.
- **Mozambique's recent elections:**
 - Following recent electoral tensions, Mozambique's Machipanda and Lebombo borders saw restrictions, with authorities advising transporters and drivers to park safely and avoid travel.
 - Reports of a potential week-long strike, which started on Thursday, added to the uncertainty, though no major updates have been received.
- In summary, cross-border queue time averaged **~5,7 hours** (up by **~0,6 hours** from the previous week's **~5,1 hours**), indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated **\$7 million (R122 million)**. Furthermore, the week's average cross-border transit times hovered around **~5,5 hours** (up by **~0,5 hours** from the **~5,0 hours** recorded in the previous report), at an indirect cost to the transport industry of **\$4,7 million (R82 million)**. As a result, the total indirect cost for the week amounts to an estimated **~\$11,6 million (R204 million, up by ~R39 million or ↑24% from ~R165 million** in the previous report.

v. Global shipping industry

- Global container throughput experienced steady growth in August 2024, with Drewry's "Global Container Port Throughput Index" rising by **↑1,0%** (m/m) to **118,3 points**, marking an annual increase of **↑6,6%**.
- The global 12-month rolling growth rate improved to **↑5,5%**, and year-to-date growth reached **↑6,9%**, with all regions—except the Middle East and South Asia—recording volume growth.
- Looking slightly ahead, global container demand remains relatively strong across the globe, with African imports and West and Central Asia the only regions exhibiting poor demand, according to the latest assessment by Maersk.
- On the market supply side, net deliveries continued to increase in 2024 and grew nearly **1 million TEU in Q2**.
 - The influx of new deliveries has helped deal with the reorganisation of networks following the Red Sea crisis.
- According to *Sea Intelligence*, global schedule reliability decreased by **↓1,2%** (m/m) to **51,4%** in September, continuing its slight downward trend since the May Peak.²
- The average delay for late vessel arrivals increased (by **0,21 days**, m/m) to **5,67 days**, which is the third-highest figure for the month, only surpassed by pandemic highs of 2021-2022.
- Maersk was the most reliable top-13 carrier in September 2024, with a schedule reliability of **55,5%**.
- After 15 weeks of consistent incremental decreases in global spot rates, Drewry's "World Container Index" increased this week in line with the planned general rate increases globally.³ The composite index is up by **↑3,8%** (or **\$118**), trading at **\$3 213 per 40-ft container**.⁴
- Meanwhile, charter rates remain stable, as the *Harper Petersen Index* (Harpex) traded around **1 973 points (↑0,3%, w/w)** on Friday.
- Other developments included **(1)** container industry emissions remaining a concern and **(2)** Canada West Coast port strike update.

vi. International air industry – South Africa

- The daily average of air cargo handled at ORTIA in the previous week amounted to **616 701 kg** inbound (**↑7%**, w/w) and a substantial **446 656 kg** outbound (**↓2%**).

² Murphy, A. 31/10/2024. [Global schedule reliability drops to 51.4% in September 2024.](#)

³ Van Marle, G. 01/11/2024. ['Desperate' GRIs by carriers prop up Asia-Europe spot rates, for now.](#)

⁴ Drewry. 31/10/2024. [World Container Index.](#)



- Despite the slight decrease in international air cargo volumes, the average cargo handled remains significantly above the figures registered last year (**↑13%** versus October 2023) and also above pre-pandemic (**↑12%** versus October 2019).
- International air cargo remains robust; however, despite recent highs, the industry remains below the peaks reached in November 2017 (and nearly matched last November).

vii. International air industry

- In the last full week of October, global air cargo spot rates increased by **↑5%**, driven by rate rises from Asia Pacific (**↑3%**), Europe (**↑7%**), and Central & South America (**↑8%**), with average rates reaching **\$2,93 per kilo**.
- While tonnages remained stable, worldwide levels are around **↑4%** higher than last year.
- October's preliminary figures indicate a **↑7%** year-on-year increase in tonnage, though lower than earlier double-digit rises.
- In other developments, **(1)** e-commerce growth shifts industry focus to speed and efficiency, and **(2)** capacity shortages may persist due to regulatory challenges.