

Transnet Officially Launches the Train with the Most Wagons

[Johannesburg; 24 October 2019] Transnet SOC Limited today officially launched a 375-wagon manganese train, which is a production train with the most number of wagons in the world. The train runs over a distance of around 861 km, from Sishen to Saldanha and is four kilometers long.

The train will break TFR's own record and a world record of the 342-wagon iron-ore production train.

Running such a train means that rolling stock, as well as some infrastructure, needed to be upgraded to 30 tons per axle on the section between Hotazel and Sishen.

The wagons were increased from 312 to 375 wagons, increasing manganese volume from 19 656 tons to 23 625 tons per train.

Commenting on the success of the test, TFR's Acting Chief Executive Mr. Lloyd Tobias said, "This is in line with TFR's business objective of applying the heavy haul operating, maintenance, design, construction and best practice principles on General Freight operations, and the Transnet Strategy of migrating traffic from road to rail".

Transnet's share of export manganese has been growing exponentially from 5mt in 2012/13 to a record-breaking 15.1mt in 2018/19. This growth has supported the recent conclusion of the Manganese Export Capacity Allocation agreements, the last of which was signed in September this year. Transnet has signed take-or-pay agreements with 10 manganese exporters in the country.

The project will maximise the manganese volumes by optimising the use of existing assets, locomotives and wagons, within the installed infrastructure constraints, doing more with what is currently available. Furthermore, the Heavy Haul Technology,

Radio Distributed Power, is used in line with the current global strategy, which is to enable the running of long trains.

TFR General Manager for the Iron Ore and Manganese Business Unit, Mr. Russell Baatjies explained that there was an option of increasing Manganese's Rail capacity to respond to customer demand by upgrading the existing railway feeder lines and build new rolling stock. "That option would have cost us significant capital. The project team was challenged to explore the use of technology through Industry 4.0 solutions, to achieve the same objective at minimum cost. Applying distributed power technology to increase the train length to 375 wagons will reduce capital requirements by over 90% of the initial estimate".

Following this successful execution of the test train last year, Transnet has since operationalised the 4-kilometre train, which is meant to meet the needs of manganese customers within the Hotazel area, and that of emerging miners.

TFR General Manager, Mr. Brian Monakali who is also the former Chairman of International Heavy Haul Association said, "This is another breakthrough for the Heavy Haul Railway Industry. Rio Tinto, Australia, recently started with the implementation of Driverless trains in their Iron Ore railway system. Transnet has now successfully operationalised the 375 wagon train. The collaboration on technical research and sharing of best practice by Heavy Haul operations worldwide will surely keep pushing the operations, safety and rail capacity envelop to new levels through application of breakthrough technology".

You can watch the video by clicking [here](#)

Issued on behalf of Transnet

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