



Project Initiation Report

1. Project Details

Project Name	Freight Rail Revitalisation Framework
Location	Across the Western Cape
Sector	Economic
Department	Department of Mobility
Project Owner	Deidre Ribbonaar
Project Manager	Deidre Ribbonaar

1.1 Background & Justification

Freight rail has historically played a critical role in supporting the Western Cape's agricultural, manufacturing, and extractive value chains. Over time, however, sustained underinvestment, declining infrastructure condition, operational inefficiencies, and institutional constraints have led to a significant deterioration in rail performance. As reliability declined, large volumes of rail-friendly freight shifted to road, resulting in higher logistics costs, increased congestion, accelerated road deterioration, higher accident risk, and rising greenhouse gas emissions. These impacts have been felt most acutely along strategic provincial corridors and in regions already shaped by historical spatial and economic inequality.

At the same time, Transnet's constrained financial position has limited its ability to rehabilitate branch lines and respond at the scale required to restore freight rail competitiveness. Without intervention, continued rail underperformance poses material risks to export competitiveness, food security, industrial resilience, and long-term economic growth in the province.

The Freight Rail Revitalisation Framework is justified as a strategic, evidence-based response to these challenges. Grounded in detailed freight-flow analysis and scenario modelling, the Framework identifies substantial rail-friendly demand that can be shifted back to rail, delivering significant transport-cost savings, externality reductions, and resilience benefits. By aligning provincial action with national rail reform, enabling private-sector participation, and prioritising high-impact corridors and terminals, the project provides a structured pathway to restore rail as a reliable, low-carbon backbone of the Western Cape's freight system, while delivering lasting economic, social, and environmental value.

1.2 Project Scope

The Freight Rail Revitalisation Framework comprises a province-wide programme of analytical, planning, and coordination activities to restore the performance and viability of freight rail in the Western Cape. The scope of work includes detailed freight-flow and scenario analysis; identification and prioritisation of high-impact branch and feeder lines; assessment of infrastructure condition, maintenance backlogs, and terminal requirements; and development of phased implementation pathways. It further encompasses alignment with national rail reforms, preparation of business cases for priority corridors, structuring of private sector participation opportunities, and coordination with municipalities, regulators, freight owners, and potential operators to enable bankable project development.

2. Objectives & Key Focus Areas

Objective	Key Focus Area
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Restore High-Impact Freight Rail Corridors	• Prioritising Infrastructure for Maximum Impact • Addressing Climate Change & Sustainability
Enable Private Sector Participation in Freight Rail	• Enhancing Private Sector Partnerships • Innovation & Futures Planning
Shift Freight from Road to Rail to Improve System Resilience	• Prioritising Infrastructure for Maximum Impact • Addressing Climate Change & Sustainability

3. Project Timeline & Cost

Estimated Duration	30 Year(s) & 0 Month(s)
Estimated Start Date	01 Jul 2026
Estimated Amt	R 0

4. Submission & Approval

Self Approved By: **Deidre Ribbonaar**

Self Approved On: **05 Jan 2026 11:21:04 AM**

Submitted By	
Submitted On	
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Approved On	