

TNPA puts PPPs back on the agenda

Focus likely to start with container terminal development

BY Alan Peat

The phrase “public-private partnerships (PPAs)” is back in vogue again, according to Chris Matchett, Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) executive head infrastructure.

This after the concept became a bit of an expletive at government level, slammed by union body Cosatu some years back.

“Eighteen months ago PPPs were not on the cards,” he said, “but the climate is

changing dramatically.”

It’s an exercise in simple logic, he explained.

The authority has compiled a port development framework plan for each of its commercial ports, and these plans include a 30-year cargo forecast and indicate that SA will have to invest more than R230-billion in its port infrastructure during that time.

“Transnet just can’t afford that,” Matchett told FTW.

Also, PPPs can transfer part of the risk of a venture to

the private sector participant, and not let the development risk reside solely with the TNPA.

The areas on which PPPs could focus would probably start with container terminal development and operations, he added, but not excluding private investments in other, more basic infrastructure.

“My guess is that we will see the start of projects going out on that basis in the next two years, or even sooner,” Matchett said.