

R21.7bn allocated for airport infrastructure development

The Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa) has earmarked R21.7bn for the development of airport infrastructure. This investment primarily targets refurbishments, efficiency improvements, and statutory compliance measures, with the aim of enhancing asset availability, airport safety and passenger experiences across airports.



Source: Oskar Kadaksoo via [Unsplash](#)

Addressing a media briefing on the state of the aviation sector, Minister of Transport Sindisiwe Chikunga said this was the largest capital investment programme by Acsa since preparing for the 2010 World Cup.

"This will see our already world class airports increasing the airport facilities to continue leading as Africa's best airports and increasing our position globally. Over the next two years, Acsa plans to embark on crucial capacity expansion projects at Chief Dawid Stuurman International Airport (Gqeberha) and George Airport, focusing on expansion of their terminal facilities.

"The terminal expansion project at George Airport is set to commence at the earliest opportunity due to the airport passenger throughput having passed its design capacity pre-Covid-19. This will be followed by Chief Dawid Stuurman Airport within the next year or two.

"Furthermore, Acsa is set to embark on the development of a new cargo terminal, known as Mid-field Cargo, at OR Tambo International Airport on a prioritised basis given the demand and later the development of a Mid-field Passenger Terminal.

"Other significant projects at OR Tambo International Airport will include extension of the bussing gates, which will entail adding six new bussing gates to the existing Terminal A bussing terminal, along with augmenting retail, seating, and holding lounge areas," the Minister said.

Additionally, as part of phase 2 of this project, a new mezzanine level will be constructed to enhance circulation and optimise seating and holding space.

"At Cape Town International Airport, priority will be the domestic arrivals terminal reconfiguration to meet growing capacity needs. This encompasses enlarging the meet and greet area, expansion of the baggage claim area, an additional baggage carousel, expansion of the domestic departures lounge, retail spaces, and ablution facilities, as well as the addition of three new contact gates and fixed boarding bridges.

"Secondly, the initiation and development of the realigned runway development project is anticipated within permission period," Chikunga said.

King Shaka International Airport will see the development of a hotel, given that it is a relatively new airport, with terminal expansion during the final year of the permission period.

At King Phalo airport, the focus during the permission period will be on expansion of the departure lounge, relocation of the security check point, upgrading of ablution facilities, improving retail options in the departure lounge, and adding offices and lounge space on the first floor.

"Acsa continues to diligently review the master plans of its airports, driven by twofold objectives: to meet the current infrastructure needs while also ensuring preparedness to fulfil future demands.

"This ongoing process is crucial in strengthening the foundation for a resilient air transport system for South Africa, a cornerstone for advancing our country's economic development and growth," the Minister said.

In the year 2022/23, the Air Traffic and Navigation Services SOC Limited (ATNS) invested R128m in support of its goal of having reliable and stable air traffic management infrastructure, which ultimately boosts the country's aviation economy and contributes up to 3% to the national gross domestic product (GDP).

"In ATNS' pursuit of more essential infrastructure upgrades to ensure that the entity is future-fit to continue delivering on its national mandate, up to R155m is required in the next financial year for investment into its Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunication Network (AFTN)," the Minister said.

Air cargo innovations

As part of innovations within the sector to enhance efficiency and competitiveness, eAirwaybill have been introduced in air cargo industry.

Innovations such as real-time tracking systems, data analytics, automation, and artificial intelligence can streamline operations, improve visibility, and optimise resource allocation.

"Embracing this digitalisation can only lead to greater transparency, cost savings and a better customer experience within this space.

"While we also embrace innovation, we are equally mindful of cyber threats. Cybersecurity is essential for maintaining the integrity, safety, and resilience of the aviation system. We are collaborating more to effectively mitigate risks and enhance

cybersecurity across the sector.

"The truth of the matter is that the future of freight is digital; and that is our reality. Therefore, a robust air cargo system is essential for global trade, speed, efficiency, connectivity, supply chain resilience, economic growth, and the timely delivery of essential goods and services," the Minister said.

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