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Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Sihle Zikalala.

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ZIKALALA PUSHING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HARBOURS

Deputy Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Sihle Zikalala will be fast-tracking the programme for the development of what will become the country's first small harbours.

Tomorrow Zikalala will travel to Port St Johns in the Eastern Cape to consult stakeholders around the construction of a small harbour in the area.

"The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) is on track for the development of the first small harbours in the country since the 1950s.

"Deputy Minister Zikalala will be joined by Eastern Cape Public Works and Infrastructure MEC Siphokazi Lusithi, Port St Johns local Municipality Mayor Cebisa Mazuza, and the Eastern Cape chair of the House of Traditional leaders Mpumalanga Gwadiiso.

"Deputy Minister Zikalala's stakeholder engagement in Port St Johns also brings about small harbours development outside the Western Cape for the first time since the dawn of democracy," the department said.

Apart from Port St Johns, other coastal areas which have been identified for the development of small harbours were Port Shepstone in KwaZulu-Natal and Port Nolloth in the Northern Cape.

The department was also planning to restore two Saldanha Bay harbours, which are in a state of derelict as a result of years of neglect.

The development of harbours was at the centre of the government's economic development and job creation plans.

Last month Transport Minister Barbara Creecy announced an initiative to attract the private sector into rail and port infrastructure development programme expected to create at least 20 000 jobs and generate more than R1,6 billion in tax revenue over five years.

"Together with Transnet, the government has received numerous unsolicited proposals from the private sector offering investment, skills, and expertise to support the rehabilitation and reform of our struggling rail and port systems. We are committed to building a transport system that strengthens industrial competitiveness, deepens regional integration, and drives inclusive economic growth," Creecy said.