

UNLOCKING

A STRATEGIC NATIONAL ASSET

South Africa's Ore Export Corridor (OEC) is a strategic national asset for iron ore and manganese ore exports that plays a critical role in supporting exports, employment, investment and economic growth. As the primary export route for a significant majority (96%) of the country's iron ore production and an important route for manganese ore exports, the corridor is essential to maintaining South Africa's competitiveness in global markets and enabling long-term investment across the mining value chain.

Why the Ore Export Corridor matters

- The Ore Export Corridor is South Africa's primary export route for iron ore and a secondary export route for manganese ore.
- It is one of the country's most strategically important freight and logistics systems.
- Its performance directly influences export volumes, foreign exchange earnings, employment and investment across the mining value chain.
- A well-functioning corridor strengthens South Africa's global competitiveness and reputation as a reliable supplier to international markets.

South African iron ore sector at a glance (2025)

- 55 million tonnes of iron ore produced (up 1.7% year-on-year)
- 52.8 million tonnes exported of which 51.5 million tonnes (96%) was exported through the OEC.
- Around 4% of global iron ore exports supplied by South Africa
- More than 70% of exports destined for Asia (53% to China)
- South Africa produces predominantly high-quality hematite, sought after by global steelmakers

Economic contribution:

- Approximately 22 500 direct jobs
- Approximately 7 000 indirect jobs
- Approximately R117 billion annual direct GDP contribution
- Approximately R90 billion in annual foreign currency earnings
- Approximately R11 billion in annual taxes and royalties
- Approximately R10.2 billion in annual direct employment costs

Source: Minerals Council South Africa Facts and Figures 2025 and member company disclosures.

Today, the OUF brings together iron-ore exporters who make use of the OEC and works in partnership with stakeholders to support a more reliable, efficient and competitive export system.

Ore Export Corridor – Iron Ore Export rail flows

Mine cluster detail – Sishen / Postmasburg



Mines shown are IRNE loading points in the source model.



LEGEND

- IRNE – iron ore export (OEC)
- MNGE – manganese export (context)
- Corridor terminal
- Mine / loading point

A high-performing corridor supports:

- Export growth and foreign exchange earnings.
- Employment across the mining value chain.
- Ongoing investment in mining and related industries.
- Regional economic development.
- South Africa's global competitiveness

The performance and reliability of the OEC enables evacuation of iron ore and manganese ore exports. Strengthening corridor performance is therefore a national economic priority.



The OEC is South Africa's primary iron ore export route, connecting mining operations in the Kathu region and Postmasburg area of the Northern Cape to the Bulk Terminal in Saldanha Port in the Western Cape. The reliability and performance of the corridor are critical to sustaining exports, employment, investment and long-term industry growth.

Purpose:

To support the long-term sustainability, efficiency and competitiveness of the OEC through collaboration, stakeholder engagement and technical expertise.

Vision:

An integrated, reliable, efficient and globally competitive OEC that supports economic growth, employment, exports and long-term investment. The OUF believes the OEC should operate to world-class bulk commodity export corridor standards of reliability, efficiency and performance.

Leadership and governance

The OUF operates through a formal governance structure designed to support effective decision-making, accountability and stakeholder engagement.

The structure comprises:

- An Independent Chairperson.
- An OUF Board representing member companies.
- A Project Management Office (PMO) with representatives from member companies and strategic and technical OUF advisors.

Who we are



OUF is an industry-led collaboration established to support the long-term sustainability, efficiency and competitiveness of the OEC.

The OUF brings together major users of the corridor to engage constructively with government, Transnet and other stakeholders on issues affecting corridor performance, reliability and future development. Through collaboration, technical expertise and coordinated stakeholder engagement, the OUF seeks to contribute to practical solutions that strengthen one of South Africa's most important freight and export systems.



OUF at a glance

Established: May 2022

Founding members: Sishen Iron Ore Company (SIOC) (part of Kumba Iron Ore), Assmang, Afrimat and Sedibeng Iron Ore

Governance: Independent Chairperson, Board and Project Management Office (PMO)

Membership: Membership is open to iron ore producers and junior miners with a valid mining permit from the Department of Mineral Resources and Petroleum Resources (DMPR) and rail allocation on the Ore Export Corridor.

Why we exist

The OUF was established to strengthen collaboration across the Ore Export Corridor and support improved performance, long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

It provides a structured platform for industry participants to align, share expertise and engage constructively with stakeholders across the freight and logistics ecosystem.

The OUF does not replace existing institutions or decision-making structures. Rather, it complements them by contributing coordinated industry insight, technical expertise and solution-oriented engagement.

What success looks-like

The OUF envisions a high-performing corridor that enables sustainable growth, supports investor confidence and creates long-term value for industry, government, communities and the broader economy.



This includes a corridor that:

- Supports consistent export performance
- Encourages long-term investment
- Strengthens South Africa's global competitiveness
- Operates to world-class bulk commodity export corridor standards

Current focus areas

The OUF's work is guided by a commitment to practical, solutions-oriented outcomes. Key focus areas include:



Providing future funding support on specific OEC initiatives through an appropriate mechanism to fast-track execution



Facilitating constructive engagement between industry, government, Transnet and other stakeholders



Contributing technical expertise and the direct voice of the customer to rail and port logistics policy and regulatory discussions



Supporting long-term infrastructure planning and investment discussions



Encouraging collaboration on OEC recovery and sustainability



Promoting a shared understanding of the corridor's strategic importance



OUF journey to date

Since its establishment in 2022, the OUF has evolved into a structured industry platform focused on supporting improved corridor performance and competitiveness.

2022

- OUF established.
- Formal governance structures established.
- Terms of Reference agreed.
- Competition law protocol adopted.
- Master Non-Disclosure Agreement implemented.
- Members aligned on the OUF objectives.

2023

- Structured engagement with Transnet initiated.
- Independent Technical Assessment (ITA) commissioned in conjunction with Transnet.
- Development and alignment on OUF strategy and plan.

2024

- Alignment on key corridor priorities strengthened.
- ITA concluded and the findings were presented to the OUF and Transnet.

2025

- OUF incorporated as a legal entity and the Board was appointed.
- Expanded stakeholder engagement.
- Participation in freight and logistics reform discussion.
- Coordinated industry input into policy and regulatory processes.

2026

- Continued engagement on logistics reform.
- Strengthened communications and industry coordination activities.
- Independent Chairperson appointed.

Throughout this period, the OUF has contributed industry expertise, operational insight and informed perspectives to support constructive engagement on corridor performance and long-term development.

Through these priorities, the OUF contributes to a corridor that is resilient, investable and capable of supporting long-term growth.



Our role in supporting logistics reform

South Africa's freight and logistics sector is undergoing significant reform to improve performance, efficiency and competitiveness.

As a platform representing major corridor users, the OUF contributes industry perspectives, operational insights and technical expertise to these processes.



The OUF supports reforms that:

- Enhance network performance
- Improve reliability
- Enable investment
- Strengthen long-term competitiveness

Its contribution is grounded in evidence, operational experience and a commitment to constructive engagement.

The organisation does not advocate for individual commercial outcomes, but seeks to support informed and balanced decision-making that advances the sustainability and effectiveness of South Africa's freight logistics system.

Looking ahead

The second half of 2026 will be a pivotal period for South Africa's freight and logistics sector, with ongoing policy, regulatory and operational developments shaping the future of the OEC.

The OUF will continue to support collaboration, contribute informed industry perspectives and engage on practical solutions that enhance corridor performance and long-term sustainability.

Through this approach, the OUF aims to support a more efficient, resilient and competitive freight system that enables investment, strengthens export performance and contributes to sustainable economic growth.

How we work

The OUF is founded on the principle that collaboration delivers better outcomes.

By bringing together corridor users, technical expertise and stakeholder perspectives, the OUF provides a platform for informed discussion, constructive engagement and practical problem-solving.

The organisation works collaboratively with government, Transnet, industry participants and other stakeholders to support shared objectives for the OEC. Its approach is guided by a commitment to partnership, transparency, evidence-based decision-making and long-term value creation.

The OUF seeks to foster alignment on key priorities, encourage knowledge sharing and support constructive dialogue on issues affecting corridor performance, competitiveness and sustainability.

Through ongoing engagement and collaboration, the OUF aims to contribute to a reliable, efficient and globally competitive corridor that supports economic growth, employment, investment and export competitiveness.



Contact and engagement

The OUF welcomes constructive engagement with stakeholders who share an interest in strengthening South Africa's freight and logistics system and supporting the long-term success of the OEC.

For further information, please contact:

The OUF PMO

Email: admin@ouf.co.za.