



## **Export industry ready to create growth in recovery period**

20 August 2020

Despite the effects of Covid-19 on the local economy, a robust recovery is possible through the combined efforts of all role-players in the Eastern Cape export industry.

Speaking at Exporters Eastern Cape recent Exporter of the Year online awards, Transnet National Port Authority Acting Chief Executive Captain Rufus Lekala said on average a 20% reduction in freight volumes had been experienced across Transnet due to the pandemic and the lockdown.

“While this period has been very disruptive, especially to our port operations, we have embedded the ‘new normal’ practices across our port system. It is going to be a tough road ahead to recover and rebuild, but I am certain that we can all come together to position the Eastern Cape province as a global player and market leader,” said Lekala.

He commended Exporters EC for making it possible to continue the proud tradition of honouring the province's best exporters with the Exporter of the Year Awards. “You all play a critical role in growing our country's economy. And I am certain that this role will be further heightened as we seek to recover from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our economy,” said Lekala.

Port of Port Elizabeth Port Manager Rajesh Dana also congratulated Exporters EC on behalf of Transnet, the platinum sponsor for the Exporter of the Year Awards Ceremony, for hosting the 25<sup>th</sup> awards ceremony on Friday, August 14.

“The economic recovery from Covid-19 will take a united and extraordinary effort from all South Africans. This will entail among others integrated, cost-effective, and efficient export of South African goods and services. To this end, exporters and logistic service providers will play a critical role. Transnet congratulates all the award winners and look forward to partnering and collaborating with them to catalyse the economic recovery of the Eastern Cape and South Africa,” said Dana.

The award for the Overall Exporter of the Year 2020 went to S4 Development Services, who achieved a turnover growth of 71% in the period under review. S4 Development Services Marketing Manager Gideon Smith said winning the award was “unexpected, but a privilege to receive such a prestigious award”.

“We've seen the bulk of our growth stemming from connected vehicle projects using the Microsoft Azure Connected Vehicle Platform, in areas of smart content delivery to automotive service centres. We also experienced additional demand for capacity in our existing areas of operation with a focus on manufacturing software



solutions. Our continual commitment to delivering value and quality to our partners is paying dividend with S4 being able to expand and create additional permanent positions in our company," said Smith.

While the proudly Port Elizabeth company in the first half of 2020, was able to secure a long-term contract for development and application support with a major manufacturer that added 9 full-time positions, they were not unaffected by Covid-19.

"The pandemic has certainly had a major impact on our plans, and we are very fortunate to have continued operating almost normally thus far. There is a lot of uncertainty about the immediate future, however, we remain positive. Looking towards 2021 we are slowly but surely seeing an increase in demand once more and we will hopefully be in a position to add more people to our growing family soon," said Smith.

Smith added that many companies across the world had to rethink their strategy and embrace technology and new ways of working to remain relevant and competitive in the marketplace.

"We believe that the Covid-19 pandemic has helped many firms, out of necessity, overcome the fear of adopting new technologies into their day-to-day work and we believe that it may catalyse the adoption of more 4IR related technologies. As wonderful as all the technology is, the pandemic has once again reminded us of the importance of the human factor. Without a team of dedicated people to work with you through the challenging times, you will not succeed," said Smith.

S4 Development Services were the Overall Winner of the Exporter of the Year Awards, as well as the recipient of the IDC Job Creation Merit Award and the Best Exporter Medium Enterprise Winner.

Sponsors of the 2020 Exporter of the Year Awards included Transnet (Platinum Sponsor), Volkswagen Group South Africa (Gold Sponsor), Oracle Media (Gold Sponsor), the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber (Silver Sponsor), the Industrial Development Corporation (Bronze Sponsor), and Magnetic Storm (Bronze Sponsor). The Media Sponsors for the Awards were The Herald and Kingfisher FM.

[Ends]

For more information, contact Exporters Eastern Cape Branch Coordinator, Suzanne Vermeulen at [info@exportersec.co.za](mailto:info@exportersec.co.za)