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Each oil rig that comes into the port of Saldanha is worth millions of dollars and thousands of jobs to the South African economy, says Western Cape Finance and Economic Development Minister **Alan Winde**, who would like to see the port of Saldanha create additional capacity for oil-and-gas related activities.

Speaking to *Engineering News Online* in a video interview at the opening of iron-ore miner Kumba's new high-technology sampling plant at Saldanha, Winde welcomed the national recognition that South Africa's latest industrial policy action plan gives to both the oil-and-gas and the boat-building businesses.

"Oil and gas is not about the Western Cape alone, but it's about South Africa as a whole," Winde says. Pointing to an oilrig in the harbour during the visit to Saldanha of *Engineering News Online*, Winde said that South Africa should aim towards attracting many more of these rigs to Saldanha from the West Coast of Africa.

He also sees the offshore gas resources in South Africa's Orange River Basin on the Cape West Coast as having the potential to mitigate energy risk for South Africa during the period of build-up of the Medupi and Kusile coal-fired power stations, which are currently under construction inland.

In the next five years, the provincial Minister envisages the creation of additional quays at Saldanha for delivery of oil-and-gas services, new facilities to encourage the beneficiation of metals and minerals, and the possible emergence of a manganese export terminal, in addition to the highly utilised iron-ore export terminal.

South Africa last year exported more than 47-million tons of iron-ore from the deep-water port of Saldanha, and has plans to increase the exportation level to 60-million tons in the near term.

Winde says that the Western Cape has convinced national government to support the province's bid to investigate the economic viability of establishing an industrial development zone (IDZ) in its port region. The province is currently searching for growth engines to meet its prime objectives of creating economic growth and jobs.

The R10-million IDZ study under way is focusing on the area that extends from the City of Cape Town to Saldanha Bay, which generates 80% of provincial revenue.

Winde welcomes the initiative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to encourage IDZ development through legislation as well as the DTI's R15-billion mineral beneficiation vision for the area, and also sees the IDZ as a possible future hub for the manufacture of renewable energy products.

Saldanha Mayor Randall Abdol says that the DTI's announcements have the potential to create 129 000 jobs in the region.

Winde would like IDZ development to be accelerated through the introduction of meaningful incentives.