

Port of Santos plans terminal expansion



The President of the Santos Port Authority (APS) Anderson Pomini told Brazilian media that it is drawing new expansion plans to accelerate projects.

Michele Labrut | Jan 30, 2024

The state-owned APS intends to launch two public-private partnerships (PPPs) by the end of 2024. One is for the deepening of the access channel and the other for a tunnel connecting the cities of Santos and Guarujá.

The port is also studying the expansion of the terminals of Brasil Terminal Portuário (BTP) and Santos Brasil by about 1.5 million teu through contract addendum, without the need for a tender, he said.

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The Port Authority has officially ruled out the idea of a new mega container terminal.

“This year, I have an obligation to enforce speed. To do that, I needed three things: the removal of the port from the privatisation programme, which slowed down the contracting; more funds; and the delegation of competencies [a measure that decentralised decisions on auctions and planning to the APS]. All three have been resolved,” Pomini said.

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The deepening of the port’s access channel—one main demand of port operators—to 17 metres from 14.5 metres would be done through a PPP. “We are studying with the BNDES [Brazilian Development Bank] a concession for dredging and other related services, for 25 or 30 years.”

The port authority is planning a new route to expand the port’s container terminals. Instead of a new 2.3 million teu-mega container terminal, the Port Authority is proposing to expand the terminals of BTP, a Maersk and MSC joint venture and Santos Brasil, annexing adjacent areas, which would be done by means of a contract addendum, without the need for a tender, Pomini said. Together, the two expansions would add 1.5 million teu of capacity per year.

In the case of BTP, the idea is to incorporate part of the area that would be included in the mega container terminal. “I can avoid a bidding process because it’s in the public interest for BTP to increase its capacity and for a public pier to be implemented. There are legal instruments that allow merger without a bidding process.”

In the case of Santos Brasil, the annexed area must be cleared because it is currently occupied by precarious housing. “It’s an easier case because it’s a non-bidding area. We’ll remove the houses on stilts, and in return the company will invest in the construction of these houses.”

Port operators' sources say that there is interest in expanding capacity, but everything depends on the terms of the counterparts.

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