

# Procurement starts for modernising Prasa rail network

By [Andiswa Maqutu](#)

26 Apr 2016

The Passenger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa) has begun procurement of construction work to modernise rail infrastructure for the arrival of 600 trains purchased in a R59bn deal with Gibela Rail Transport Consortium. The procurement is part of Prasa's R172bn modernisation programme to overhaul the aged urban Metrorail commuter service and will include modernising signalling and rail tracks, as well as station upgrades.



Prasa has 135 stations in the country that will be modernised for the new trains. Last week, Prasa revealed that more than R30bn of the R59bn contract with Gibela had been set aside for domestic suppliers.

Gibela is a special purpose vehicle for the deal, which is 61%-owned by French power and transport giant Alstom. Empowerment partners own the remaining 39%.

Prasa also has a separate R5bn contract for 70 locomotives from Swifambo Rail Leasing, which is buying the stock from Vossloh España. The locomotives are for the long-distance Shosholoza Meyl service.

## Lifting platforms to match locos

Last year, media reports said the locos were "too tall" for SA's rail lines. Prasa has since applied to the High Court in Johannesburg to have the contract set aside.

Yesterday, Prasa's business readiness manager for modernisation in Gauteng, Abram Nkgabutle, said work had been done to lift station platforms to match the Gibela train level at three stations in Gauteng including Park Station and Mamelodi Station. Tenders for work to align platforms at 10 other stations on the priority line between Mamelodi and Pretoria were still being advertised. The priority line is where the first trains will run.

Nkgabutle said aligning platforms was one of various construction projects that would run across the country to prepare the existing infrastructure for the new trains. The trains are expected to begin commercial service in October. Prasa expects to take delivery of 11 trains before the end of this year.

Nkgabutle said the Mamelodi-Pretoria corridor would also be the first to run only the new Gibela trains, about three months after the first train goes into commercial operation in October.

Rail Safety Regulator (RSR) spokeswoman Babalwa Mpendu said Prasa had submitted a report to the RSR seeking approval to test the train on the Metrorail rail line. The report dealt with the state of the infrastructure where tests would take place.

*Source: Business Day*

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>