South Africa: Delivering a Cement Plant Expansion by Sea and Road

Project Logistics | South Africa

Breakbulk Sea Freight & Specialised Transport

Röhlig-Grindrod coordinated a major project logistics programme to move approximately 12,000 tonnes of cement plant equipment from Shanghai to a plant site in South Africa across three breakbulk movements over two years.



Project Highlights

Project Detail	Verified Information
Customer Industry	Cement manufacturing and construction materials
Origin	China
Destination	South Africa
Transport Modes	Containerised sea freight, breakbulk sea freight and specialised port-to-site transport
Teams Involved	Italy and South Africa
Additional Services	Customs coordination and processing, tallying and surveying, port operations coordination, milestone reporting and final delivery
Cargo	Equipment for a cement plant extension
Total Weight	Approximately 12,000 tonnes
Unit Weight	Up to 80 tonnes per piece

Project Overview

The Customer Requirement

An industry-leading cement manufacturer was expanding its production facility in South Africa and needed project-critical equipment transported from Shanghai to the plant site. The relationship began with a Delivered at Place (DAP) shipment of approximately 90 TEU, with Röhlig Italy coordinating the international movement and Röhlig-Grindrod managing delivery from the port to the site.

The successful execution of this initial assignment demonstrated Röhlig-Grindrod's operational and project-management capabilities, leading to a significantly larger plant extension contract comprising three breakbulk projects over the following two years.



The Challenge

Operational Complexity

High-Volume Staged Consignment

Managing approximately 12,000 tonnes of breakbulk project cargo as a staged consignment required close coordination with customs authorities under a staged consignment ruling.

Oversized & Heavy Cargo Risks

Individual pieces weighing up to 80 tonnes required specialist handling to protect equipment from damage or loss during discharge and handover at the port.

Weather & Seasonal Restrictions

Operational plans had to adapt to inclement weather, disrupted vessel operations, and South Africa's December embargo restriction period for abnormal transport.

Multi-Provider Coordination

Aligning international freight forwarders, customs authorities, port operators, surveyors, transport providers and the construction site as schedules and requirements changed throughout the programme.

The Solution

How Röhlig-Grindrod Responded

Building on the Initial Shipment

The initial 90 TEU movement allowed Röhlig-Grindrod to establish a clear operating relationship with the customer and demonstrate its ability to manage the final delivery stage, forming the foundation for the full plant expansion programme.

Coordinated Customs Processing

Röhlig-Grindrod coordinated the documentation and processing required under the staged consignment ruling granted by Customs & Excise South Africa, supporting orderly clearance and handover as successive cargo stages arrived.

Cargo Control During Discharge

Specialist tally and surveyor services were procured for the offloading operation, providing independent cargo records and mitigating the risk of damage, shortages or discrepancies at this critical transfer point.

Port-to-Site Transport Management

The team coordinated transport providers and delivery schedules from Durban to the plant, with particular attention to oversized units including pieces weighing up to 80 tonnes, continuously reviewing plans to account for weather and vessel disruption.

Dedicated Project Oversight

The Röhlig-Grindrod South Africa team maintained central oversight of the local operation, with continuous stakeholder communication and milestone reporting keeping the customer and all service providers aligned as conditions changed.

The Result

Verified Outcomes

Critical equipment reached the plant on schedule, supporting the customer's expansion programme across three breakbulk movements over two years.

Specialist surveying and tallying reduced the operational risks associated with oversized cargo weighing up to 80 tonnes per piece.

Customs, port and transport activities were coordinated across multiple service providers, with delivery planning adapting to weather disruption and seasonal transport restrictions.

The relationship progressed from an initial 90 TEU assignment into a major plant expansion programme, strengthening Röhlig-Grindrod's position as a trusted logistics partner for industrial projects.

Röhlig-Grindrod Perspective

> *"This project showed how dependable execution on one shipment can build the confidence for a much larger programme. Close coordination across customs, port operations, surveyors and transport providers helped us keep critical plant equipment moving despite changing conditions."*

Siveshnie Moodley
Import Manager
Rohlig Grindrod (Pty) Ltd



Frequently Asked Questions

How was the cement plant equipment transported from China to South Africa?

The project combined containerised and breakbulk sea freight with specialist port-to-site transport. Cargo moved from Shanghai through the Port of Durban before final delivery to the cement plant. Röhlig Italy coordinated the international movement, while Röhlig-Grindrod managed all South African port and transport operations.

How was customs clearance managed for the staged breakbulk consignment?

Röhlig-Grindrod coordinated customs documentation and processing in accordance with a staged consignment ruling granted by Customs & Excise South Africa. This allowed the cargo to be processed and handed over in successive stages as each breakbulk movement arrived at the Port of Durban.

How were the risks associated with oversized cargo managed?

The project team procured specialist tally and surveyor services for cargo discharge, coordinated suitable transport providers for abnormal loads, and maintained dedicated oversight through to final delivery. These controls were particularly important for cargo pieces weighing up to 80 tonnes, where the risk of damage or loss during discharge was highest.

Have a logistics challenge of your own?

Every shipment comes with different requirements. Whether you're planning a complex project, exploring a new trade lane or simply looking for a more effective way to move your cargo, our teams are ready to discuss the options with you.

Talk to a Röhlig expert about your requirements and find the right approach for your business.

Contact us online | Find a local office

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