Operation Phakisa focuses on unlocking the economic potential of South Africa’s oceans, which could contribute up to R177 billion to the GDP by 2033 and between 800 000 and 1 million direct jobs. 47 detailed initiatives have been identified, which, on implementation, will increase the oceans economy’s GDP contribution by R20 million and lead to the creation of 22 000 direct new jobs by 2019.

SIX FOCUS AREAS
By focusing on six priority growth areas, the Oceans Economy will unlock the economic potential of South Africa’s oceans, providing significant GDP growth and job creation potential. These modules - Skills and Capacity Building and Research, Technology and Innovation, support the six focus areas.

1. Marine Transport and Manufacturing
Economically significant: The countries that can achieve a strategic advantage in maritime transport and manufacturing can realize a competitive advantage in terms of volumes of trade and associated economic activity. This growth area will focus on the development of capacity for the maintenance of ships and cargo vessels and other vessels. South Africa has major ports with capabilities for container ships, general cargo vessels, Roro, and ro-pax vessels. There is investment and development in shipyards in the Western Cape, Durban, and Richards Bay. An investment in the Durban shipyard will increase capacity and allow for the refurbishment of mid-life vessels.

2. Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration
Economically significant: South Africa has significant oil and gas potential off its east and west coast as well as on its continental shelf off the east coast. South Africa is yet to truly realize its offshore exploration potential. The fields are very deep, and the infrastructure needed for exploration and production currently is not commercially feasible. Commercial infrastructure is yet to be developed. The Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Western Cape are the areas of the most interest. A recent auction was held in the Western Cape by the Department of Mineral Resources.

3. Aquaculture
Economically significant: The aquaculture value chain has significant potential for growth in South Africa with the potential to create considerable employment and revenue. Aquaculture has not expanded in line with the growing demand for seafood and the ever-increasing global competition. Using the provincial and national strengths, a focus has been placed on value-creating, labour-intensive, high value, fast-growing species, which improve the balance between supply and demand.

4. Marine Protection Services and Governance
Economically significant: South Africa is rich in marine biodiversity and has a vast coastline, which gives the country a competitive advantage in marine protection services. South Africa has 27 national marine protected areas, which is small compared to its length of coastline and biodiversity. There is potential to increase the size and number of marine protected areas, which will change the economic landscape of the country.

5. Small Harbours
Economically significant: South Africa has a total of 126 harbours, of which 85 are small harbours. Small harbours are a strategic asset, which can contribute significantly to the economic growth of coastal communities and the surrounding regions. The small harbours project is intended to unlock growth and create jobs by assessing the potential of small harbours as job creation and growth areas. The aim is to create 12 000 jobs and to unlock R1.6 billion in economic activity.

6. Coastal and Marine Tourism
Economically significant: The tourism sector is promoted as the tourism sector is one of the world’s fastest growing industries, contributing significantly to the economy and providing a wide range of economic benefits. South Africa, with its diverse coastline and rich marine biodiversity, has the potential to become a leading marine tourism destination. In particular, the development of new tourism infrastructure and the promotion of existing tourism facilities can significantly contribute to the economy. South Africa is considered a one-of-a-kind tourism destination, offering a wide range of marine tourism experiences and attractions.