

and the creation of hundreds of jobs.

Since the port will primarily serve as a transshipment hub, it's expected to attract key shipping lines by competing with the ports of Djibouti on the horn of Africa and Durban in South Africa. In addition it would serve key markets in southern Ethiopia and South Sudan.

So far, around 19 shipping lines have inspected the port. The Kenya Ports Authority anticipates many will use it and take the generous promotional offers currently in place.

On the positive side, road works connecting Lamu to Nairobi via Garissa are well under way. And the new road between Lamu and Garsen has already reduced transport costs as trucks and travellers no longer need to go via Mombasa.

Once the project's highway towards Garissa and Isiolo is completed, the former northern frontier region may benefit from the connection to the port.

But there are big question marks when it comes to the overall economic value of a second Kenyan deep-water port. This concern is driven by the deficient infrastructural integration of Lamu and Northern Kenya.

Logistics experts also warn that Lamu port has formidable potential to become a white elephant project because of the immense uncertainties about its core use.

What have been the big issues around construction?

Planning and construction of the port have yielded a wide range of concerns and contestations, particularly on land rights, the environment, local livelihoods and security.

Different rights groups have documented numerous complaints by residents about compulsory land acquisition. One study found that the government had taken more land than it paid compensation for.

Another major concern touches on the environmental impact of the port's construction, some of which

# 19

**Shipping  
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