The company maintains an extensive rail network across South Africa that connects with other rail networks in the sub-Saharan region, with its rail infrastructure representing about 80% of Africa’s total.

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and Transnet Freight Rail, South Africa’s largest freight rail company, have a five-year agreement for a significant capacity building programme in railway operations management.

The agreement follows a pilot programme for a BSc Railway Operations Management running in South Africa with Transnet Freight Rail. In the new five-year collaboration, Transnet will recruit 220 students per year to the programme.

Transnet Freight Rail is the largest division of Transnet, with approximately 25,000 employees throughout South Africa. It is a world class heavy haul freight rail company that specialises in the transportation of freight.

The programme was designed by GCU’s Scottish Centre for Work Based Learning in partnership with the Institution of Railway Operators and was rolled out in South Africa in partnership with the University of Johannesburg.

Fiona Stewart-Knight, Director of Business Academies at GCU, says: “This is a considerable project in the context of human capital development for Transnet and of significant scale for GCU. The South African Government is investing R300bn over the next 6 years in freight rail infrastructure (rail and rolling stock); our project is part of the corresponding activity in investment in people.”

Transnet Freight Rail’s core business lies in freight logistics solutions designed for customers in industry based business segments such as mining, heavy and light manufacturing.
By 2019, Transnet Freight Rail aims to increase its market share of container traffic from 79% to 92%.

Transnet Freight Rail said by introducing the programme, it will set a benchmark for the railway industry pave the way for the future development of young talent for the benefit of the organisation.

“We know that we need to build on our operational competencies and collaborate with local and international service providers to access learning solutions that are world class. We expect our employees to go back and plough what they have learned and we think that this programme journey will change participants’ lives,” said Johannes Makhusha, Head of Transnet’s School of Rail.

In 2012, President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, President of South Africa announced in his State of the Nation Address that Transnet would invest more than R300bn in infrastructure development to rejuvenate the economy, create jobs and address poverty and inequalities.

Of this amount, R201bn has been channelled to Transnet Freight Rail to expand its rail infrastructure to create capacity and increase cargo volumes. Through investment, Transnet Freight Rail will be able to optimise its capital portfolio, build a world class capital execution function and leverage capital procurement and localisation.

GCU Principal and Vice-Chancellor Pamela Gillies said: “Glasgow Caledonian University is an international university with strong access and international missions. This focused knowledge and capacity building programme is a wonderful illustration of that agenda and an opportunity for us to learn from our South African partners.”

GCU Business Academies are customised education programmes. We partner with industry to design and deliver flexible and bespoke staff development programmes which incorporate our clients’ own strategic objectives for immediate impact.

Our Business Academy partnerships incorporate a work-based learning model and provide clients with accredited, high quality professional development programmes designed to suit their requirements.

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At Glasgow Caledonian University, we work with industry and public sector partners to ensure our expertise responds to the need for real world innovation. GCU’s strategic business development and knowledge transfer teams work with academic experts in our Schools and Research Institutes to support businesses with a problem-solving approach.

Contact us to find out more about building a brighter future with GCU at www.gcu.ac.uk/business.

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