AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF CONSTRAINTS AND IMPEDIMENTS AT SOUTH AFRICAN LAND PORTS OF ENTRY

M MASHIRI and J CHAKWIZIRA*

Gwarajena TRD, 25A Barnstable Road, Lynnwood Manor Village, Tshwane,
Email: macmashiri@telkomsa.net Mobile: +27 72 122 9394;
Landline: +27 12 348 5008
*University of Venda, School of Environmental Sciences, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, P/Bag X5050, Thohoyandou, 0950;
Email: james.chakwizira@univen.ac.za; jameschakwizira@gmail.com,
Landline: +27 15 962 8585; Mobile: +27 76 387 7814

ABSTRACT

Facilitating regional trade and commerce is vital for the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It also constitutes a pivotal policy plank for South Africa in terms of bolstering regional economic integration. However, a host of constraints and impediments located and operating at different scales make prospects for increased and unencumbered economic activity amongst the countries of this regional economic community (REC) untenable. One such formidable impediment is a non-tariff barrier associated with land ports of entry (POEs).

This paper presents an exploratory analysis of constraints and impediments at selected POEs into South Africa. This is achieved through taking stock of the status quo at 15 of the 53 official POEs with a view to exploring challenges related to the efficient movement of people, goods and information into and out of South Africa. Literature reviews were supplemented by insights gleaned from interaction with a cross-section of stakeholders including truck drivers, travellers, and customs officials. In addition, on-site observations at POEs ensured that a richer understanding and interpretation of the research findings was achieved. While the research findings attest to the existence of pockets of good practice at some POEs, the overwhelming evidence was of POEs largely operationally manacled and hamstrung by structural constraints.

The study provides recommendations revolving around the need to adequately plan for and upgrade the physical infrastructure, for example, in terms of redesigning clearing facilities to facilitate easy flow of pedestrian and commercial traffic, deploying adequate infrastructure for law monitoring and enforcement, as well as implementing a raft of strategic and operational measures at individual POEs aimed at optimising the use of the port and minimising border delay. In the long-term, institutional reform relating to, for example, the establishment of a single agency dedicated to border management, a commitment to continuous capacity building as well as the development of one-stop-border-posts (OSBP) at selected POEs are considered integral to efforts to finding long-term solutions.
Key Words: Land ports of entry, cross-border trade, regional integration, constraints, one-stop-border post, non-tariff barriers, South Africa, SADC

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The conclusion of various rounds of multilateral trade negotiations and the implementation of preferential trade arrangements such as customs unions – the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) – and free trade areas – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) – have resulted in the reduction of tariff barriers in the eastern and southern African region. However, the need to comply with individual country regulatory requirements imposes costs on trading across borders, especially when this results in delays as a result of additional procedures and requirements, corrupt practices and constrained administrative capacity (Kiec, 2010).

Curtis (2009) argues that the costs of production and trade in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region are significantly higher than in other regions and, further observes that, unless these costs are reduced, the region will remain uncompetitive, except perhaps in commodities. In fact, the cost of transport in the region constitutes up to 40% of business (or the total value of goods sold within the sub-region) compared to an average of 12% in developed countries (COMESA, 2004; Van Niekerk & Moreira, 2002). Clearly, freeing trade in the region will create a larger more diverse market, unleashing the regional economic community (REC)'s potential for intra trade, economic growth, employment and general prosperity. This often has the effect of boosting productivity and product quality, attracting foreign direct investment resulting in an expansion of external trade with markets outside the region.

1.2. Problem Statement

A land port of entry (POE) is a facility that provides controlled entry in and out of any country – usually accommodating customs and immigration, as well as other inspection agencies responsible for the enforcement of that country's laws (World Bank, 2007). A POE often consists of physical infrastructure such as administrative and commercial buildings, roads and parking facilities. While South Africa has approximately 53 official land ports of entry around which the work of the Cross Border Roads Transport Agency (C-BRTA) is largely circumscribed, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that there are other 'unofficial' entry points into the country. In addition, mounting anecdotal evidence suggests that the official POEs exhibit significant operational deficiencies which have the overall effect of truncating the free flow of people and goods between South Africa and its REC counterparts, thereby frustrating efforts towards the seamless integration of Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the notion of a mooted common market. In this regard, Kalenga (2005) argues that the widespread use of non-tariff barriers among SADC states has indeed limited the envisaged trade-increasing impact of tariff reductions.

1.3. Aim of the Paper

The aim of this paper is to explore and unravel constraints and impediments associated with POEs in South Africa with a view to generating a bouquet of sustainable intervention options to ensure the efficient flow of people, goods and information between South Africa and its REC counterparts.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms and Concepts

To assist with the better understanding of issues covered in this paper, the following working definitions covering three key concepts are enumerated below.

- ***Coordinated border management (CBM):*** This is defined as the organisation and supervision of border agency control activities to meet the common challenge of facilitating the movement of legitimate people and goods while maintaining secure borders and meeting national legal requirements (World Bank Group 2005).
- ***One-stop-border posts (OSBP):*** Kiec (2010) defines a one-stop-border post (OSBP) as a border post with the ability of border authorities from two countries to perform joint controls in terms of their respective laws, which is calculated to result in improved enforcement efficiencies through cooperation, the sharing of intelligence and better resource utilisation.
- ***Non-Trade Barriers (NTBs):*** These are defined as invisible trade barriers that often inflate the cost and risk of doing business in a region, and thereby affect the competitiveness of exporters. More importantly, these barriers such as import and export licenses, customs administration, and the difficulty of transporting food products, block the access of smaller firms to regional markets. They impose substantial costs to exporters due, in part, to ad-hoc procedures and associated delays in the movement of goods and services (Mutambara, 2008).

2 STUDY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Approach

The study employed a mixed method approach involving extensive literature reviews, highlighting the impact that non-tariff barriers have on supply chains, profiling stakeholder perceptions by way of unstructured interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders, interviewer-administered questionnaires with truck drivers and travellers, intensive discussions with a selection of stakeholders operating at POEs (the South African Revenue Service (SARS), Department of Home Affairs – Immigration (DHA), Department of Health's Port Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (DAFF), South African National Defence Force (SANDF), South African Police Services (SAPS), provincial traffic police and C-BRTA officials), direct onsite observations, as well as a study visit to a functional one-stop border post in SADC – Chirundu – to learn about and compare the operational modalities of a streamlined POE with its South African counterparts (Mashiri et al, 2011).

One hundred and twenty-nine (129) persons were canvassed for their opinions between November 2010 and January 2011 covering low and peak periods in terms traffic flows through POEs. Purposive sampling and snowballing techniques were used to identify specific types of respondents, for example, truckers from a particular country.

2.2 Fieldwork

2.3.1 Location and Rationale for POE Selection

South Africa shares borders with six SADC countries, namely, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique utilizing 53 official POEs into the country. In order to get a good understanding of the cross-section of issues relating to cross border movement without necessarily visiting all the POEs, fifteen (15) POEs – made up of commercial and tourist POEs – were considered a fair purposive sample size (refer to Table 1 below for a list of the selected POEs). The main criteria used to select the POEs for the study included its size, its location, its operation times, its daily cross-border traffic volumes and its reputation for incidents. A rapid assessment of these 15 POEs was undertaken between November 2010 and January 2011.

Table 1: Land ports of entry visited

Border Post		Date Visited	Location
1	Caledonspoort	22 December 2010	South Africa / Lesotho
2	Ficksburg	23 December 2010	South Africa / Lesotho
3	Grobler's Bridge	10 January 2011	South Africa / Botswana
4	Ramatlabama	11 January 2011	South Africa / Botswana
5	Kopfontein	12 January 2011	South Africa / Botswana
6	Skilpadshek	13 January 2011	South Africa / Botswana
7	Golela	17 January 2011	South Africa / Swaziland
8	Oshoek	18 January 2011	South Africa / Swaziland
9	Mahamba	18 January 2011	South Africa / Swaziland
10	Bothashoop	18 January 2011	South Africa / Swaziland
11	Lebombo	19 January 2011	South Africa / Mozambique
12	Van Rooyen's Gate	20 January 2011	South Africa / Lesotho
13	Peka Bridge	20 January 2011	South Africa / Lesotho
14	Beitbridge	20 January 2011	South Africa / Zimbabwe
15	Maseru Bridge	21 January 2011	South Africa / Lesotho

Source: Research Findings

The broad representation and profiling of different types of border posts was meant to explore and capture constraints and opportunities characterizing most POE typologies as well as highlighting local specific issues.

2.3.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken at three POEs in December 2010 with a view to testing, re-designing and refining all the study instruments (questionnaires and checklists). Piloting necessitated revisiting some of the questions in the study instruments to remove ambiguities while others, particularly relating to travellers, were shortened to ensure shorter completion times to allow time-sensitive travellers to get on with the relatively harrowing business of crossing a border.

2.3 Study Limitations

Given the time limitations and the budgetary constraints, the study did not involve traffic counts. In addition, some stakeholders that could shed some light on cross-border operations were unreachable or unavailable. Some of the other challenges relating to project execution included the following:

- *Bad weather* – Heavy rain on the specific day surveys were being conducted influenced the number of truckers and travellers that could be interviewed.
- *Protocol issues* – Some officers from SAPS, DHA and SARS declined to take part in the survey citing gaps in protocol, that is, their senior management had not given them official permission to provide information.
- *Time* – While small POEs did not warrant a full day of surveys, the busier ones such as Beitbridge, Lebombo, Oshoek, Kopfontein and Maseru needed more than a day to ensure that all the issues were covered. The time limitation was exacerbated by a major public holiday falling in the middle of the project.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 SADC Regional Economic Community Profile

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), which was established in 1992, is a regional economic community (REC) that is full *of potential and opportunity and yet hamstrung by structural constraints and impediments,* some of which are discussed in this paper. It is an expansive region made up of fourteen countries of varying sizes and levels of development (Hansohm & Shilimela, 2005) with a relatively large population (270m) and massive, yet relatively untapped resources such as agriculture, minerals and water. However, SADC is also a region of vast inequalities in incomes, quality of services, levels of education and skills and employment opportunities. As a response to the latter, SADC perceives regional trade integration as a means of fostering economic growth and development through increased intra-regional trade and cross-border investment.

3.2 Stimulating Regional Trade

Globalisation and international trade liberalisation initiatives have resulted in the rapid growth of the value and volume of goods moving across borders (Kiec, 2010). For example, SADC intraregional exports increased fourfold between 1990 and 1995, and almost doubled between 2000 and 2005 (IMF, 2005). The sharp rise in the first half of the 1990s reflected a normalization of regional economic relations in the post-apartheid era, whereas the latter increase has been attributed to

accelerated trade liberalization within SADC (AfDB, 2008). However, the share of intraregional exports in total exports has risen only slightly since 2000. Mills (2008) contends that in recent years, national economies in all parts of the world have benefited from greater regional integration, with one notable exception – Africa – largely because African countries trade on average just 10% of their goods with each other, in part, because African products lack complementarity. Trade costs constitute a high percentage of the costs of African exports and imports. The high cost of transport in Africa, which is between 30% and 40% above that in other developing regions, seriously undermines the continent's growth prospects. Mills (2008) further argues that for almost half of the 48 sub-Saharan countries, transport payments absorb more than 20% of foreign export earnings – a situation that is decidedly worse for most landlocked nations, where these costs absorb over 50%. Given that 43% of SADC states are landlocked, the region can be described as largely uncompetitive as these costs are largely passed onto customers.

3.3 Strengthening Economic Lifelines

Road and rail transport are the dominant modes of transporting goods and people within SADC. They handle the bulk of imports and exports in the respective countries, thus providing a vital transport link for the countries' diverse import and export commodities. As indicated above, close to 43% of SADC countries are landlocked, making road and rail networks the major corridors linking countries to principal ports in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania (Mutambara, 2008). It is thus imperative that bottlenecks in the form of delays at POEs are significantly reduced. Particularly significant is the negative impact of poor transport infrastructure on rural development, making it difficult for African farmers to specialise in high value horticultural products and fruit crops for export. It is of interest to note, for example, that the North-South Corridor already has Chirundu as a one-stop border post which renders the Beitbridge POE a bottleneck that needs to be singled out for immediate focused action, not least, because of the magnitude of the daily traffic that crosses this POE.

3.4 Cross-border Mobility of Labour

Historically, cross-border mobility of labour within the common monetary area (CMA) countries (Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa) and other SADC states particularly Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique was relatively extensive (Wang et al., 2007) to the benefit of the region. It would thus certainly be prudent to understand the cross-border choke points to enable South Africa to double its efforts to further liberalize cross-border labour movement (albeit taking into account the reality of high unemployment in the region) with a view to taping on the skills base of the region, which would go a long way in strengthening the region and provide the wherewithal for regional competitiveness (Metzger, 2008). In this regard, for example, streamlining and simplifying the regulations on labour entry and work permit and other requirements would facilitate orderly movement of labour, particularly skilled labour, and lower the costs for private sector-led growth in South Africa and the region in general.

3.5 Road Transport

The regional road transport sector is characterised by deregulated road transport services competing with relatively more inefficient rail services which has led to a shift in general freight volumes from rail to road. The permissible gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 56 tonnes is considered one of the highest in the world (with only Australia having a higher allowable GVM) and has the effect of increasing the competitiveness of road against rail, and also of significantly increasing the cost of road maintenance, which is not fully compensated for in the setting of road user charges and toll fees (COMESA-EAC-SADC, 2008). There is also a degree of cross-subsidisation of road freight from passenger vehicles and directly from government.

In terms of volumes, regional trade is characterised by exports of mining and agricultural products and imports of manufactured goods. The main operating feature of the regional road transport routes, which affects transport efficiency, costs and tariffs, is the imbalance of freight flows, leading to empty return hauls, or waiting for return hauls. This imbalance can be seasonal and can also vary from month to month. An empty return haul by road effectively means that transport costs almost double. Another challenge is overloading of vehicles by transport operators which often causes premature damage to the road infrastructure. However, the region has developed a harmonised axle load control system for implementation across the entire region.

4 STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 POE Operation Times

Of the 53 POEs, only six (Vioolsdrift and Nakopi (Namibia), Maseru and Ficksburg (Lesotho), Beitbridge (Zimbabwe) and Alexander Bay (Mozambique)) operate round the clock for 24 hours. The rest of the POEs largely operate between 06h00 – 22h00 or 08h00 – 18h00. While operating times are linked to volumes of traffic and passenger demand, restricted opening times impact on regional traffic flow and movement.

4.2 Waiting and Delay Times

Defining wait and turnaround times: The study sought to assess the average time taken to cross a POE and causes for delays at POEs. This was critical to establish the efficiency in traffic and pedestrian movements. From a transportation perspective, wait time emanates from traffic demand approaching or exceeding the available capacity of the supporting infrastructure (e.g. highways, border facilities) and/or the processing capacity of the border post (Sabean & Jones, 2008). It is pertinent to note that waiting time at POEs accounts for a significant proportion of the total time required for transportation, delays in customs clearance procedures that involve multiple institutions, and delays in document and goods inspection (in part, making up turnaround time).

While officials claimed quicker processing times of less than ten minutes, according to the testimony of travellers interviewed, the average time taken to cross a POE was 36 minutes and the average time to claim value added taxation (VAT) was given as over 2 hours. The most common reasons given for delays at POEs included the following:

- Inadequate resources and staff complement
- Inadequate infrastructure – especially lack of parking and often constrained IT support systems (leading to interminably long downtimes)
- Suspected deep-rooted corrupt activities, and
- Lack of proper understanding of processes, systems and documents by clients and officials alike.

Intuitively, the longer freight takes to reach its destination, the greater will be the implicit interest costs of working capital (ESCAP, 2003).

4.3 Profile of Truck Drivers Interviewed

As indicated in Table 2 below, the total number of truckers interviewed for the study was 53. There was a preponderance of the youth (under the age of 40) in the sample of truck drivers. While this could be a testimony to the success of the industry's succession program, the youthfulness and, perhaps, inexperience of these truck drivers could also point to a difficult patch in the historical trajectory of the industry. This refers to the fact that the industry has been haemorrhaging largely as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. What it also means is that this age group is at its most sexually active period, which has implications with respect to questions of HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention along the corridors that they ply their trade (Mashiri et al, 2012).

Table 2: Age profile of sampled truck drivers

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
25 – 30	11	21
31 – 40	15	28
41 – 50	13	25
50+	9	17
Not specified	5	9
Total	53	100

Source: Research Findings

What is encouraging though is that the freight industry has retained some experience as 25 percent of the truck drivers are between the ages of 40 and 50. These figures correlate with anecdotal evidence from discussions with commentators in the industry.

Table 3: Nationality of truck drivers interviewed

Nationality	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Botswana	10	17
Congo	1	2
Lesotho	1	2
Namibian	4	8
South African	19	36
Swazi	1	2
Zambian	8	15
Zimbabwean	3	13
Not specified	3	6
Total	**53**	**100**

Source: Research Findings

Table 3 above presents the nationality of truckers interviewed for the study. Upwards of 36% of truckers were South Africans which suggests that most of the goods originated from South Africa destined for the rest of the REC. This suggests that South Africa should have a major interest in seeking to reduce the cost of doing business in southern Africa by reducing delays at POEs and reducing the turnaround times of commercial vehicles.

The majority (70%) of truck drivers interviewed indicated that they did not have an assistant driver. This question has some major safety implication associated with it – because cross-border journeys are often long and tiring, drivers are prone to making mistakes and crashes can occur (refer to Figure 1 below).

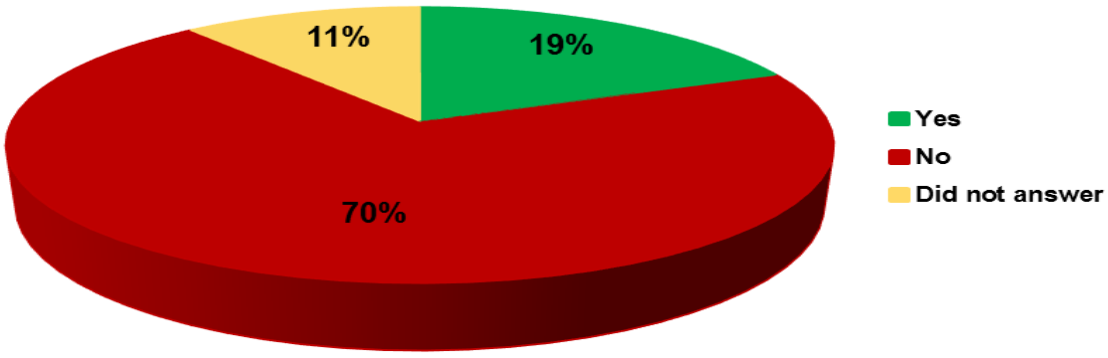

Figure 1: Whether or not truck drivers have assistant drivers

However, some drivers countered this by saying that their employers do not allow them to travel after 18h00 which means they always have a good night's rest before travelling. They also point to the border delays as another window of opportunity to recover. However, there are times when they are forced to drive because the cargo is urgently required – just-in-time (JIT) consignments, and the spectre of accidents occurring increases. It is thus crucial that employers should seriously consider employing an assistant driver to assist with dealing with fatigue.

4.4 Origin and Range of Goods and Truckers

While SADC's competitive edge is largely in commodities, and naturally, mining and agricultural products were well represented in the variety of goods transported across South Africa's POEs, industrial products as well as building materials were also significant. Table 4 below presents the freight companies sampled for the study.

Table 4: Freight companies sampled for the study

1	Cargo to go	15	Lutro Felina Trading	29	Rustgold
2	Nagpal Transport	16	Celtic Freight	30	Laubus
3	HDJ	17	Kuqlamazulu	31	Lique Wholesalers
4	Adcon	18	Coopers Carriers	32	Pearl Transport
5	Baba Carrier	19	Vicinog	33	SB Tippers
6	Formax Industries	20	Mishtrucks	34	Translink Truck & Bus
7	Benida	21	Bradlows	35	Wheelson
8	Sellit	22	Flex	36	Logico
9	WP Transport	23	CHB	37	DMB Company
10	Flexisop	24	Etosha Transport	38	Dynamic Rental
11	Omkar Limited	25	Monke Petroleum	39	NRB Logistics
12	Markram	26	Camako	40	Loubser
13	PV Investments	27	STC	41	SB Transport
14	South Gate	28	Not specified		

Source: Research Findings

Table 4 above indicates that a significant number of the commercial vehicles employed on these long hauls across borders in southern Africa are South African, which strengthens the argument that South Africa has a lot to gain from improving the way that its land POEs (including those of its counterparts in the region) do their business, and therefore that it needs to proactively intervene.

Table 5 presents the range of goods ferried by commercial trucks assessed. It is of interest to note here that most of the mining commodities should ideally be transported by rail given their bulkiness and weight – which would reduce not only congestion at the POEs, but also cause less damage to the road infrastructure. The fact that it is not happening points to laxity in policy implementation with severe knock-on effects across the region.

Table 5: Range of goods ferried

Agricultural Products	Mining	Industrial	Building Materials
• Dry beans • Maize • Groceries • Flour • Water	• Chrome • Cobalt concentrate • Copper • Cobalt • Iron • Platinum	• Industrial steel pipes • Fuel • Cans • Paper • Car parts • Cars • Soap • Furniture & accessories • Parkhomes office containers • Scrap metal • Mixed goods	• Building materials • Floor Tiles • Cement

Source: Research Findings

4.5 Preclearance Practice by Truck Drivers

The majority of truck drivers (55%) indicated that they did practice preclearance using brokers to process their papers. Despite this initiative, congestion continues unabated in the busier POEs. The practice does not seem to be yielding positive results, perhaps in part, because intervening in a seemingly peripheral aspect is unlikely to give satisfactory overall results if other areas have not changed – the intervention only serves to tinker with the system, not to change it for the better. For example, it is still the customs officer's prerogative (and they often exercise this prerogative even where it is not justified) to search a vehicle that has undergone preclearance – thus defeating the objectives of the intervention. Figure 2 and 3 indicate the prevalence levels of the pre-clearance practise at POEs by truck drivers.

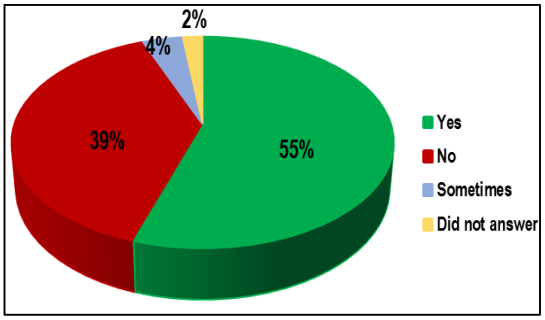

Figure 2: Preclearance practice

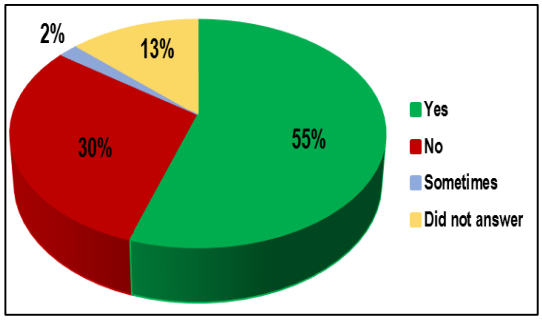

Figure 3: Use of brokers to process papers in advance

Source: Research Findings

4.6 Travellers

Twenty travellers were interviewed for the study with an equal split between male and female respondents. To some extent, it shows that the propensity of females to travel across borders for leisure and business has grown significantly over the years, which needs to be taken into account when planning at land POEs. In terms of frequency of use, while 98% of the sample indicated that they were regular users of the border posts, the majority of the sample were weekly users of the POEs. This serves to underline the importance of cross-border trade not only by established corporations, but also small traders – much of which does not find its way into official cross-border records.

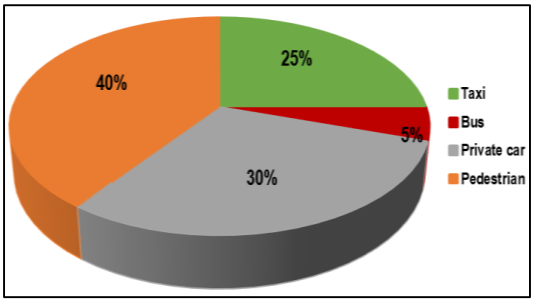

Figure 4: Mode employed by respondents

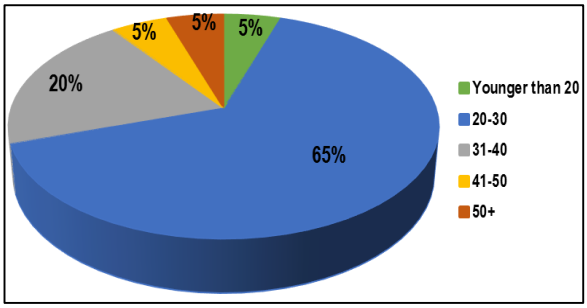

Figure 5: Age profile of respondents

Source: Research Findings, 2015

It is of interest to note as indicated in Figure 4 above that 40% of respondents crossed the border on foot (pedestrians). This seems to suggest that a significant number of respondents did not use cross-border transport modes – they used local modes that are not allowed to enter the POE compound (which has the effect of reducing congestion in the POE). A substantial number of respondents were pedestrians largely because their time in terms of responding to the survey questionnaire was not as regimented as that of, for example, bus passengers. What it also means is that pedestrians constitute a sizeable number of cross-border traffic, and as such planners should begin to plan with them in mind as well, by for example, ensuring that they provide designated fit-for-purpose safe and lit walkways.

Predictably, and as indicated in Figure 5 above 65% of the respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years – the most economically active population which is also relatively mobile and footloose. In developing interventions, it will be important to take this statistic into account.

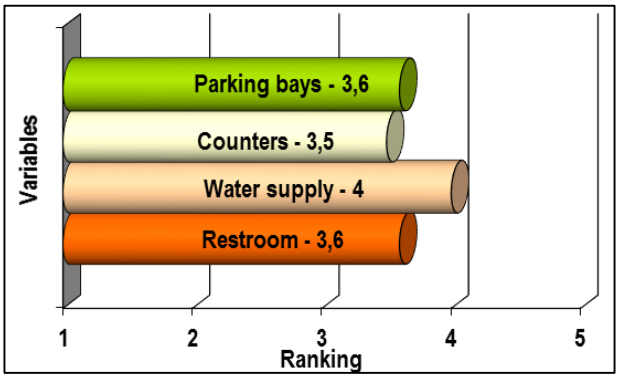

Figure 6: Rating of facilities in meeting client needs

Source: Research Findings

4.7 Rating of Facilities in Meeting Client Needs

Respondents appeared to be generally happy with the facilities. Water supply was rated the highest with a rating of 4 – 'very good' on a scale of 1-5, with 1 denoting a 'very poor' rating. What may need attention here is maintenance of these facilities (refer to Figure 6). Contracting out the maintenance contract could be one way of ensuring it is done.

4.8 Familiarity with and Applicability of the OSBP Concept

Levels of familiarity with the concept of a one-stop border post were lowest amongst the following institutions, namely, the South African Police Service (SAPS), C-BRTA Inspectors, Department of Home Affairs (DHA), Port Health, South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and truckers. However, once the concept was explained to respondents, the majority considered the OSBP concept as a workable idea – as a means of easing congestion, eliminating delays and dealing decisively with corruption. For that reason, most respondents wanted to see the concept introduced without delay.

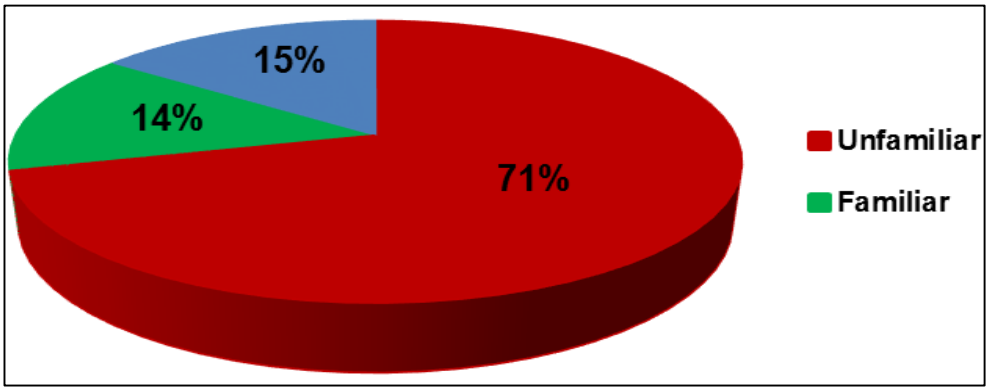

Figure 7: Familiarity with one-stop border post concept

Source: Research Findings, 2015

The majority of the respondents indicated that they were not familiar with the one-stop border post concept (refer to Figure 7 above). The main reason given by 65% of respondents who indicated that this concept would be workable was because it would reduce delays. Other reasons mentioned included:

- It is a good idea that can assist in reducing corruption
- It can markedly improve traffic flow in land POEs
- It can speed up document processing, and
- Officials from different countries would treat each other a lot better (more tolerance) as they would be working together, and spending more time together.

4.9 Challenges faced by the CBRTA

C-BRTA inspectors canvassed for their opinions enumerated the following as challenges that inhibit them from delivering on their mandate:

- Inadequate facilities such as impounding yards and offices especially at land ports of entry
- Inadequate resources – officers are unable to perform their duties adequately due to lack of resources such as vehicles, caravans, road block equipment and human resources
- Lack of CBRTA presence (24/7) and visibility at land ports of entry, and
- Lack of continuous learning events/courses – inspectors should be empowered in terms of information about their day-to-day work, especially with regard to legal issues.

4.10 Some Examples of Good Practice at Border Posts

Table 6 enumerates some good practices examples at POEs in South Africa.

Table 6: Examples of good practices at POEs in South Africa

Infrastructure	Operations	Governance
• Residences of officials were located in the POE in 38% of the land POEs assessed • Separation of traffic was undertaken by 62% of the POEs Assessed – pedestrians, truck traffic & light vehicles were separated with a view to reducing congestion & increasing throughput	• Processes & systems operate relatively well in 85% of POEs assessed – at Ramatlabama, Skilpadshek & Peka Bridge, for example, document clearance was quick resulting in shorter queues (travellers with all their documents ready were served within five minutes) • Security arrangements within the perimeter of the compound of 62% of the assessed POEs were considered optimal bolstered by sufficient & well-appointed security lighting. • Generally, planning for peak season is sustained (e.g. 46% of POEs investigated marshalled & deployed additional resources such as staff & equipment during the peak season – typical examples being Maseru & Ficksburg which utilize Peka Bridge as a flow relief POE) • Effective POE information dissemination & communication through the offices of the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI)	• While stakeholders meet regularly at the POE to resolve operational challenges, the frequency of their meetings increases during the peak season, for example, 28% of POEs investigated met daily at 8am at peak season & fortnightly during the normal season. Unresolved issues are escalated to the Provincial level where meetings are held on a monthly basis.

Infrastructure	Operations	Governance
• While a few ablution facilities at some POEs were untidy, in part, owing to volumes of traffic going through the POEs, 62% were clean & tidy.	• Joint searches were practised at 46% of the assessed POEs (all stakeholders at one place) – at the clearing facility, Customs, SAPS & the CBRTA inspectors search private, public transport & trucks at one place – CBRTA focusing on trucks & SAPS & Customs focusing on traveller • Passport control procedures at Ramatlabama were undertaken outside the building for light vehicle occupants so that travellers would not have to leave their vehicles.	• Good relations & cooperative arrangements with counterparts from bordering countries i.e. Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland & Zimbabwe.

Source: Research Findings

4.11 Challenges facing Land Ports of Entry

While Table 6 above provides good practice examples that should be the subject of a guideline document for all POEs to use (or through POE exchange visits and benchmarking activities), Table 7 enumerates challenges that militate against the optimum performance of POEs.

Table 7 presents challenges facing land POEs

Physical Infrastructure Provision	Operations	Governance
• 92% of the land ports of entry assessed had inadequate parking space to satisfy current let alone future demand • Weighbridges, which are considered essential infrastructure for law enforcement, were located far from 54% of the land ports of entry surveyed – 70km in the case of Ficksburg & 120km for Maseru • The lack of OSBP facilities • 62% of the land ports of entry assessed had insufficient residential accommodation for officials • Inadequate infrastructure such as insufficient or no storage space for confiscated goods, no incinerators to burn unwanted products & no impounding yards to store confiscated vehicles • Buildings / offices of the stakeholders in 31% of the land ports of entry canvassed were spread out in the compounds, rendering access to services relatively difficult • CBRTA inspectors do not have office accommodation at 77% of the POEs investigated. • Inadequate equipment for CBRTA inspectors, for example, they work without bullet proof vests & fire arms jeopardizing their security • Over 65% of POEs visited had inadequate office space	• At 75% of the POEs assessed, public transport modes mostly minibus taxis, offload their passengers at the entrance to the POE in contravention of their permits (& passengers, often with luggage have to walk across the border, or seek separate arrangement with private vehicle owners who are also transiting the POE) • Most POEs investigated had inadequate staffing levels particularly DHA (62% – where work stations with computers exceeded personnel on duty), SARS & CBRTA • Existence of too many control check & payment points along the main corridors leading up to the POEs • Insufficient CBRTA	• Drivers' behaviour & actions which impact on the free flow of traffic, e.g., drivers are not always available when they have to move their trucks & sometimes they do not follow instructions on where to park their vehicles • Apparent overlap between the operations of the Provincial Roads & Transport Departments & CBRTA • Irregular / ad hoc attendance of land ports of entry BCOCC meetings by CBRTA officials, makes it difficult to plan joint operations • Inadequate CBRTA

Physical Infrastructure Provision	Operations	Governance
• 30% of POEs observed indicated there was inadequate resource allocation for maintenance of infrastructure • Inadequate photosanitary & veterinary controls • Approach roads to POE studied have become bottlenecks to the smooth flow of traffic into land ports entry especially in peak seasons & therefore require treatment – increasing the number of lanes for busier land ports of entry • Upgrading tarred roads that are failing & repairing gravel that become impassable during the rainy season • Weighbridges, which are considered essential equipment for law enforcement, were located far from 54% of the land ports of entry surveyed – 100km in the case of Caledonspoort & 120km for Maseru • Most of the POEs had no contingency plans in terms of power failure (benchmarked for example against their counterparts – Botswana POEs which are equipped with generators as back-ups)	presence & visibility in 54% of the POE compounds investigated.	representation in the Provincial Task Team

Source: Research Findings

5. STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 8 below provides a range of recommendations across thematic areas.

Table 8: Recommendations for Land Ports of Entry

Thematic Intervention Options		
Land & Infrastructure	**Operations**	**Governance**
• Re-design clearing facilities to effectively accommodate pedestrians & spatially locate buildings optimally in the POE compound to improve access to services & reduce traffic chaos, e.g. Golela POE • Provide impounding facilities (& free space for parking) where demand justifies the investment, e.g., at the Beitbridge POE • Provide storage space for confiscated goods & incinerators for getting rid of unauthorized goods such as medication, fruits, plants & vegetables • Provide adequate equipment to facilitate law enforcement such as weighbridges close to POEs, scanners, sniffer dogs, etc. • Provide adequate office space for officials stationed at the land ports of entry, including C-BRTA officials • Provide adequate land for & develop parking facilities	• Extend POE operational hours where demand for such services justifies the extra hours • Ensure CBRTA representation in the Provincial Task Team • Ensure CBRTA presence & visibility in land POEs including insisting on CBRTA membership of & participation in BCOCC processes not only to bolster law enforcement efforts, but also to establish the CBRTA brand • Hire & station additional CBRTA officials at land POEs where their services are deemed necessary • Revisit permits to avoid corruption & review passenger lists to avoid conflicts	• Invite all local municipalities in which land ports of entry are located to participate in the stakeholders' meeting so that they can be party to the planning process & ensure integrated planning & operations (in their local plans) • Plan for & ensure joint planning of law enforcement operations with the local municipal & provincial traffic departments to improve customer service & minimise delays of cross-border road transport movements • Revisit the CBRTA & National Land Transport acts with a view to assessing as to whether there are any embedded contradictions which could impinge on the CBRTA effectively discharging its mandate • Provide CBRTA inspectors with adequate equipment such as road block equipment, including generators & bullet-proof vests, to enable them to effectively undertake their duties • Urgently revisit the OSBP concept with a view to discussing its phased implementation with counterparts. • Rationalize public transport operations in terms of seeking a balance in the activities of operators who cross into the country & South African operators who drop passengers at the border post. • Find a lasting solution to the *"dumping"* of passengers by public transport operators, mostly minibus taxis, at the entrance of land POEs & reduce minibus taxi conflicts amongst national, local & cross border operators

Source: Research Findings

It is important to underline the fact that interventions in POEs across the country will require partnership and collaboration between government and private sector, for example, infrastructure could be provided and maintained by the private sector employing a variety of models. The role that international organisations, civil society and NGOs can play should also not be underestimated. Given the importance of POEs to local and regional socio-economic development, it will be crucial for government and its counterpart stakeholders to seek to make the leap from the current balanced and weighted approach to control and facilitation, towards one of optimised trade cooperation and regulatory control. This could then be bolstered by the introduction of trade and transit transport facilitation instruments at the SADC level similar to the ones in operation in COMESA to minimise non-tariff barriers. Such actions will necessarily influence transport costs, which in the region are influenced substantially by the opportunity cost of delays.

Lastly, it is instructive to note here that highlighted in literature and confirmed by the study, quantifying border delay and wait time is not only relatively complicated, but can also produce spurious figures largely because, at land POEs, both demand and available capacity are variable rather than constant. In addition, demand varies by time of day, day of week or season, and POE capacity can also vary due to constrained operational conditions such as work zones on highway infrastructure, traffic and border incidents, availability of staffing and lanes, resource availability (e.g., inspection equipment for instance scanners or computer systems), or other uncertainties related to the passengers and/or cargo crossing the border (e.g., missing or incomplete documentation, enhanced interdiction activities, or referral to secondary). Comparisons, particularly with regions that have completely different operating conditions, should thus be understood against this reality.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Most POEs investigated not only had inadequate staffing levels, but were also underequipped to deal with the rapid increase in traffic (let alone sophisticated contraband movers). Thus the challenge facing the region relates to developing human resource capacities and the necessary infrastructure to cope with modern ways of doing trade. Oftentimes, officers are oblivious to the role that they should and need to play to effectively and efficiently discharge their responsibilities and the impact this has in the region and beyond. Understanding the place, role and scope of labour mobility in the SADC region coupled with acquiring the appropriate skills thus needs to become second nature to all land POEs officials. This needs to be underpinned by robust systems, equipment and remuneration to maintain high levels of motivation and dedication to public service.

A final conclusion is evident – in order for South Africa to competitively trade internationally, it is imperative to significantly lower transport costs and substantially improve border management with a view to stimulating economic development, which could unlock job creation and thus reduce poverty. It is thus imperative to seek to implement institutional reform relating to, for example, the establishment of a single agency dedicated to border management, a commitment to continuous capacity building as well as the establishment of one-stop-border-posts at strategic land ports of entry.

In addition, facilitating the movement of goods and people through, for example, harmonizing customs classifications and procedures, reducing costs by cooperatively introducing a single and standardized document for POE clearance, should also be prioritised to enable South Africa and her neighbours to reap the maximum benefits from establishing OSBPs.

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