



Beit Bridge Border Post

Progress Report

August 2010

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Beit Bridge

Introduction

The border post at Beit Bridge is an extremely important border on the North South Corridor, with significant numbers of trucks and passenger vehicles going to and from the South African ports and, to a lesser extent, Maputo, and countries to the north such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, DR Congo and Malawi. There are also instances in which the land route to the north, into Tanzania and even into Sudan, has been used in preference to the sea route. It is a border post that experiences extreme forms of traffic congestion at peak periods.

Beit Bridge was identified by the Tripartite as the main border post to work on, in terms of alleviating congestion, after Chirundu and, as such, a stakeholders' workshop was convened at Beit Bridge in May 2009. This stakeholders' workshop was attended by participants from South Africa and Zimbabwe, including border post management agencies, private sector representatives, the SADC Secretariat and the project sponsor and technical partner, the Regional Trade Facilitation Programme (RTFP) which is the successor programme to TradeMark Southern Africa (TMSA). The workshop deliberated on the key problems the border post was facing and emphasised the need to improve service delivery with a view to reduce transaction costs in terms of delayed clearance and provision of other services and developed the Beit Bridge Efficiency Management System (BBEMS).

The Beit Bridge Efficiency Management System

The BBEMS was developed in response to representations by the private sector and other stakeholders. It is a multi-dimensional programme addressing wide-ranging issues which are aimed at reducing congestion, increasing operational efficiency, reducing waiting times and lowering transaction costs at the border. This programme is part of a wider COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite work programme, supported initially by RTFP and now by TradeMark Southern Africa and seeks to enhance regional economic integration through improved trade performance and trade facilitation.

The stakeholders' meeting, held in May 2009, brought together all border agencies and other stakeholders from South Africa and Zimbabwe, and agreed on an action plan aimed at addressing identified operational and physical facility related problems. A work programme was later developed out of this action plan.

The meeting also recommended the establishment of structures that would encourage the creation of a workable border management system premised on mutual cooperation in administrative arrangements among enforcement agencies and better coordination and oversight of the implementation of activities that will achieve the desired improvements at the border crossing. Three structures were established, these being:

- *Joint Border Operations Committee*
This committee is based at Beit Bridge and deals with day-to-day operational issues and existed prior to the stakeholder meeting. It was formalised by the meeting and should meet regularly and provide inputs into the Task Team.

- *Task Team*
The Task Team, comprising key stakeholders representing both public and private sectors, is responsible for all aspects and functions relating to the design and implementation of the BBEMS Programme. It will develop and facilitate the adoption of a variety of instruments aimed at improving service delivery at the border post covering customs; immigration; plant, animal and human health; food safety; security; border infrastructure and facilities; etc. A draft work programme of the Task Team is attached at Annex 2.
- *Steering Committee.*
The Steering Committee is responsible for policy and overall programme leadership and direction, including monitoring and evaluation. It comprises Senior Officials at the level of Director General or Permanent Secretary of Departments or Ministries or their designated representatives.

The last meetings of the Task Team and the Steering committee were held in August 2009. It is, however, thought that the Joint Border Operations Committee is meeting regularly as it did prior to its formalisation.

The BBEMS work programme, which is anchored in the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite work programme, consists of activities which, when implemented, will result in the:

- finalisation of the MoU between Zimbabwe and South Africa and its signature;
- effective and timely sharing of information among all relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels;
- development of a blueprint for an integrated standard operating procedure (SOP) manual that covers procedures of all border agencies of both countries;
- adoption and implementation of common simplified and harmonised border control procedures, including carrying out joint controls by officers from both countries and the development and implementation of integrated computerised systems to enhance operational efficiency;
- improved physical infrastructure at the border post, such as roads, parking facilities, inspection bays, office space, housing, bridge, etc. so as to improve operations at the border and reduce the time taken to cross the border; and
- the establishment of a one stop border post.

The Work Programme approved by the Steering Committee is clear on what needs to be done, by when and what the expected outputs and outcomes will be. However, the process of implementation of the work programme has stalled and there is little evidence to suggest that positive outputs have been achieved. Early delivery targets have already been missed although these targets were not dependent upon the signing of the MoU or the availability of external resources.

No progress appears to have been made on the signing of the MoU since the approval of the non-legal text by the Steering Committee in August 2009 and the original planned signing date of 4 September 2009 was missed. It is reported that internal legal consultations are on-going in South Africa while they have been completed in Zimbabwe. It is also understood that unfinished business relating to 'stalled' negotiations for a bilateral MoU between the Revenue Authorities has complicated matters as some role players consider the conclusion of this MoU to have precedence over the BBEMS MoU although the latter has a wider scope and will have a greater impact when implemented.

The Steering Committee also approved a Work Programme for the Task Team with specific targets on activities which were to have been implemented from September 2009. If the agreed work programme timeframes had been adhered to the development and harmonisation of sectoral and departmental operating procedures at the national level would have been completed as the scheduled completion date was 30th November 2009. In addition, the integration of these operating procedures between the two countries and the process of computerising systems would have been well underway.

The target date of April 2010 for the delivery of an efficient traffic circulation flow process (to have been achieved by completing the design by October 2009 and demarcation of traffic separation by January 2010) has also been missed and Beit Bridge continues to suffer from heavy congestion and inefficiencies that not only adversely affect South Africa and Zimbabwe but all countries on with traffic passing through Beit Bridge border crossing such as DR Congo, Zambia, Malawi and Northern Mozambique.

Informal Ministerial Meeting on Beit Bridge

On 4 February 2010, an informal meeting on Beit Bridge was held in Harare, Zimbabwe on the margins of a SADC Task Force meeting on Regional Integration and the Customs Union. The meeting was called by the Zimbabwe delegation which wanted to provide information to other countries that have traffic passing through Beit Bridge on congestion and delays taking place at the border crossing, These delays are more acute during peak periods and stakeholders. The meeting was attended by Ministers and senior officials from Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. SADC Secretariat and TradeMark Officials were also in attendance.

The informal meeting concluded that:

- South Africa and Zimbabwe would continue to work to address all those issues that have to be addressed at bilateral level with urgency given the then upcoming 2010 World Cup Football tournament;
- South African delegation would follow up on the Ministerial level contact person who would work with Zimbabwe;
- All countries on the NSC should identify their contact Ministers (one per country) who would coordinate national positions and inputs and bring these to the NSC contact Ministerial Committee; and
- The meeting requested the SADC Secretariat to urgently convene a meeting of the NSC in collaboration with COMESA and to circulate an update paper on proposed NSC institutional arrangements which among other issues will be discussed at that meeting scheduled to take place in Harare.

North South Corridor Ministerial Meeting

A North South Corridor Ministerial meeting was held in Harare on 7th April 2010 at which the Beit Bridge border post was also discussed. The meeting was attended by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials from Botswana, DR Congo, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Officials from the Secretariats of COMESA and SADC and TradeMark Southern Africa (TMSA) also attended the meeting.

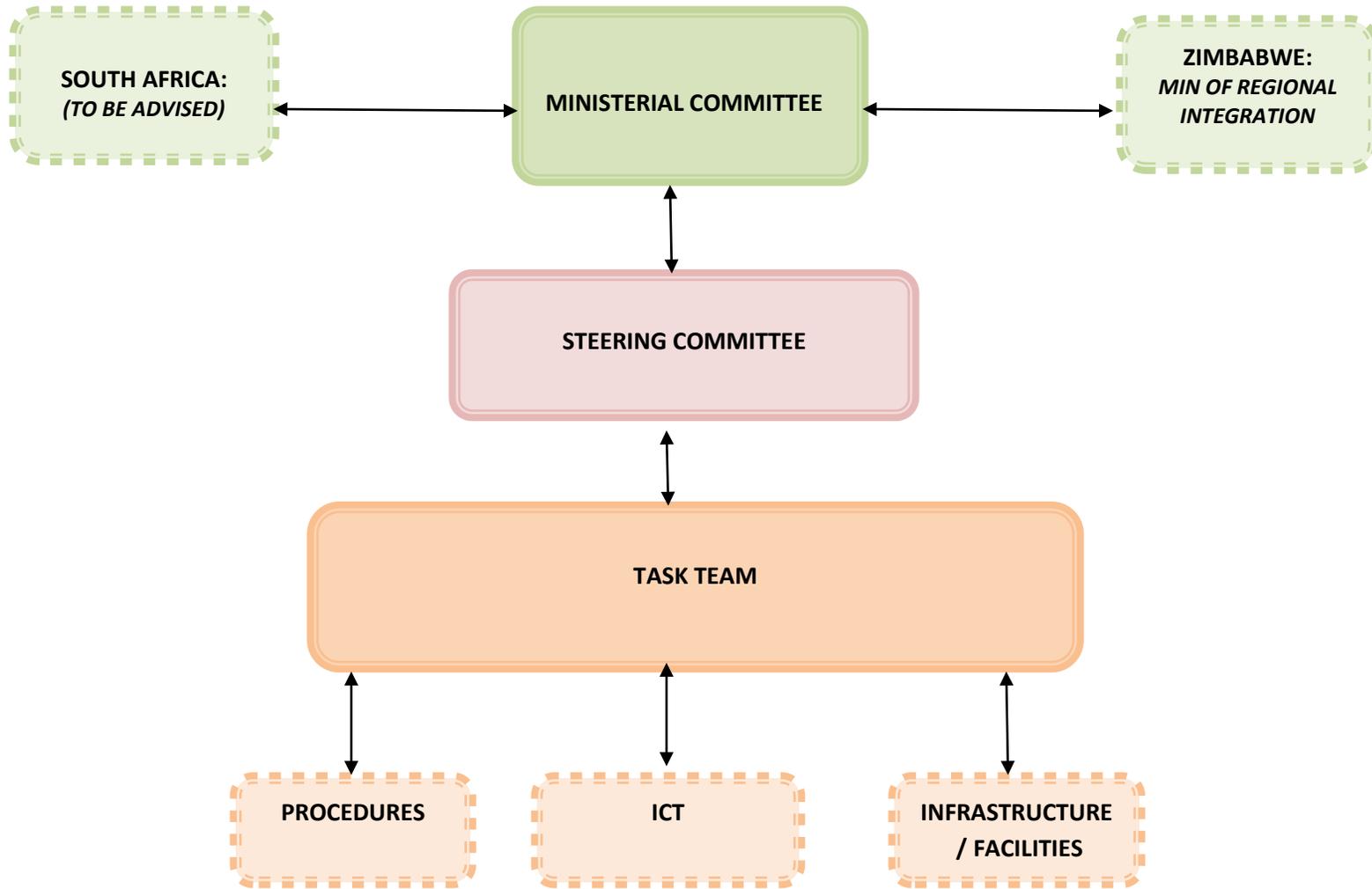
As already indicated the implementation of the Task Team work programme remained unsatisfactory. It was emphasised that the poor performance recorded so far underscored the urgent need for political leadership and guidance for the Steering Committee and the Task Team. At the same time wider cooperation by all NSC countries to support South Africa and Zimbabwe was required. It was also noted that there was a need for more national consultations amongst the key players on the modalities and legal framework on Beit Bridge.

The meeting made the following conclusions on the way forward on Beit Bridge:

- a) The Ministerial focal points on Beit Bridge are the Minister of Finance for South Africa and Minister for Regional Integration and International Cooperation for Zimbabwe. These Ministers were responsible for national consultations and coordination and would represent all other ministers on the Beitbridge Ministerial Committee Meetings;
- b) The Minister of Trade and Industry of South Africa offered to brief his colleague on the urgency of the matter so that proper political guidance and leadership is given to the technical committees, including the finalisation of the bilateral MoU;
- c) Ministers agreed that the initial focus on management efficiency was essential and work on this should continue, even in the absence of a legal instrument; and
- d) The one stop border post initiative was viewed as a long term objective which will require a feasibility study to establish the level of investments required and a special legal agreement which will take time to process.

After this NSC ministerial meeting not much has been done to work on the BBEMS programme and the technical committees have not met to revise the work programme and implement it. However there are new developments in Zimbabwe.....

ANNEX 1: BBMES PROPOSED STRUCTURE



Note: The structures inside boxes demarcated by broken borders are yet to be established.

Annex 2: Draft Work Programme of the Task Team for the Beitbridge Border Efficiency Management System

In developing and implementing this work programme cognizance shall be taken of regional integration objectives at the COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite and regional economic community levels, particularly progress being made elsewhere along the North South Corridor. Technically, the work shall be informed by developments and lessons drawn from international standards, conventions and practices.

Objective	Output	Activity	Time Frame	Inputs
1. Processes				
1.1 Development of a MoU establishing a border efficiency management system at Beitbridge	MoU which will provide mandate to the Task Team to implement the BBEMS signed	Drafting	Completed by 7 August 2009	
		Consultations within and between the countries	Completed by 30 August 2009	
		Approval and signing	Completed and effective by 6 September 2009	
1.2 Development of aligned and streamlined border clearance procedures, legal provisions and administrative arrangements	Blueprint of integrated standard operating procedures manuals developed	Share current standard operating procedures and systems at national level	Completed by 30 September 2009	
		Where non-existent, develop systems and operating procedures at sectoral/departmental level	Completed by 30 October 2009	
		Merge of sectoral / departmental systems and procedures into a single national manual	Completed by April 2010	

Objective	Output	Activity	Time Frame	Inputs
1.3 Development and alignment of best practices, compliance enforcement, and frameworks of border crossing agencies between the two countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved capacity building • Reduced trans-boundary crime levels 	<p>Identify suitable practices, adapt and adopt:</p> <p><i>i. Movement of Goods:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence sharing • Supply chain security • Border control zone security • Risk management • Standardization border agency skills base • Joint training on best practices • Pre clearance • Post clearance • Regional transit system • Harmonization of transit charges • Code of conduct /Integrity • Accreditation of economic operators • Accession to international protocols • Simplified trade regimes for small scale cross border traders • Reduction and removal of NTBs • Establishment of single window operations for border agencies • Enforcement of implementation of the 24 hour border operations <p><i>ii. Movement of Persons</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free movement of persons <p><i>iii. Transport and infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic linking of the weighbridges and standardise calibration • Rationalise of road user charges into a single payment • Transport optimization efficiency 	Completed by April 2010	
1.4 Development of Integrated	Improved communication leading to accelerated		Completed by April 2010	

Objective	Output	Activity	Time Frame	Inputs
computerization system	and effective information flow within and between agencies of the two countries	Commission a needs analysis study	By 30 September 2009	
		Computerise departments not yet computerized	By January 2010	
		Develop interface software	By February 2010	
		Establish connectivity within each country	By January 2010	
		Establish connectivity between countries	By March 2010	
		Procure hardware (new and upgrades)	By January 2010	
		Re-establish direct telephone extension between and among the border agencies of the two countries	By September 2009	
		Fully implement DTI/EDI	By December 2009	
		Electronic and bank payment system established	By December 2009	
		Electronic Rules of origin assessment and issuance of certificate of origin and invoice declarations in place	By April 2010	
		Establish facility to enhance reporting of NTB electronically while at the border	By November 2009	
		Adopt e-governance framework	By January 2010	
		Install of a CCTV	By January 2010	
1.5 Enhanced Mutual cooperation and administrative assistance arrangements between neighbouring border enforcement agencies and other facilitation agencies	Cooperation instruments established and implemented	Other relevant bilateral MoUs between agencies developed and signed	By April 2010	
	Performance Monitoring System established and implemented	Monitor and report on following key performance indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance times for selected traffic • NTBs • Budget Performance Thematic Groups to set own benchmarks which will be approved and monitored by Task Team	By December 2009	

Objective	Output	Activity	Time Frame	Inputs
2. Physical facilities/Infrastructure				
2.1 Improved border physical infrastructure such as Road and truck parking bays/truck inn, commercial offices, inspection bays, office space, housing, bridge development	Efficient traffic circulation flow process implemented	<i>i. Roads and bridges infrastructure:</i>	By April 2010	
		• Design a border crossing traffic circulation flow process	By October 2009	
		• Develop truck parking and inspection bays	By February 2010.	
		• Separate commercial and passenger traffic	By January 2010	
		• Relocate weighbridges outside the customs control zone	By March 2010	
		• Carry out engineering assessment of old bridge	By October 2009	
		Open old bridge as determined to be necessary for private vehicles	By April 2010	
		<i>ii. Buildings:</i>	By April 2010	
		• Expansion / renovation plans for office , housing and warehouses approved	By April 2010	
		• Clearance booths and information centres constructed	By January 2010	
		• Install signage	By April 2010	
<i>iii. Water and Sanitation:</i> Upgrade water and sanitation facilities	By April 2010			
2.2 Appropriate operational measures for rail traffic efficiency at national and bilateral level at Beitbridge border post - decongestion of road traffic at Beitbridge border post through diverting traffic to rail	Rail facilities and service through Beitbridge improved		Completed by April 2010	
		Designate railway stations at Beitbridge as ports of entry	By December 2009	
		Renovate and upgrade passenger and freight terminals and clearance halls at railways stations	By January 2010	
		Develop operating standards and procedures for the railways	By February 2010	
		Re-introduce passenger train service	By April 2010	
		Re-introduce on board the train clearance	By April 2010	

Objective	Output	Activity	Time Frame	Inputs
3. One Stop Border Post				
3.1 Establishment of one stop border post	One stop border post operational		By July 2010	
		Conduct situation analysis study at the border post	By September 2009	
		Carry out a comprehensive feasibility study	By November 2009	
		Develop legal framework	By April 2010	
		Develop OSBP standard operating procedure manual	By April 2010	
		OSBP awareness and publicity	By May 2010	
		Building capacity of key players	By February 2010	
		Adapt/upgrade ICT systems	By June 2010	
		Convert physical infrastructure facilities to enable implementation of OSBP.		
		Set up logistical arrangements for the implementation of OSBP pilot run	By June 2010	
		Enact legal instruments in each country	By June 2010	
		Launch of one stop border post	By July 2010	