



## MODERN AND EFFICIENT BORDER CONTROLS THE THEORY OF ONE STOP BORDER POSTS (OSBP) AND LESSONS LEARNT ON THE CHIRUNDU OSBP PROJECT

In its quest to advance its ongoing regional integration efforts, COMESA has made Chirundu the pilot for the introduction of one stop border posts in the region. This followed a May 2005 Council of Ministers decision in Kigali, Rwanda in which the COMESA Secretariat was directed to establish OSBPs in the region. The one-stop border post model at Chirundu is being supported by DFID and JICA who have committed resources to the project in order to facilitate legitimate trade in the region.

Chirundu border is the main entry point for commercial traffic entering Zambia from South Africa and other commercial ports to the South, or proceeding through to Central and Eastern Africa to the north. It is equally busy for traffic returning in the opposite direction. On a typical day, Chirundu handles an average of 270 trucks, making it the busiest port in Zambia and one of the most utilised inland border points in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.



Chirundu's strategic location as a node of trade between Southern and Eastern Africa and its role as a gateway between two busy regions made the port an ideal choice as a pilot site for the one-stop border control programme.

### Why Have One-Stop Border Control?

Busy ports in the region like Chirundu, Beitbridge, and Nakonde etc are characterised by congestion, duplicated efforts and delays in processing of goods and people. A study has shown that average transit times for trucks at Chirundu for north bound traffic range from 26 hours to 46 hours, while transit times for southbound traffic range from 6 hours to 17 hours (See Figure 1)

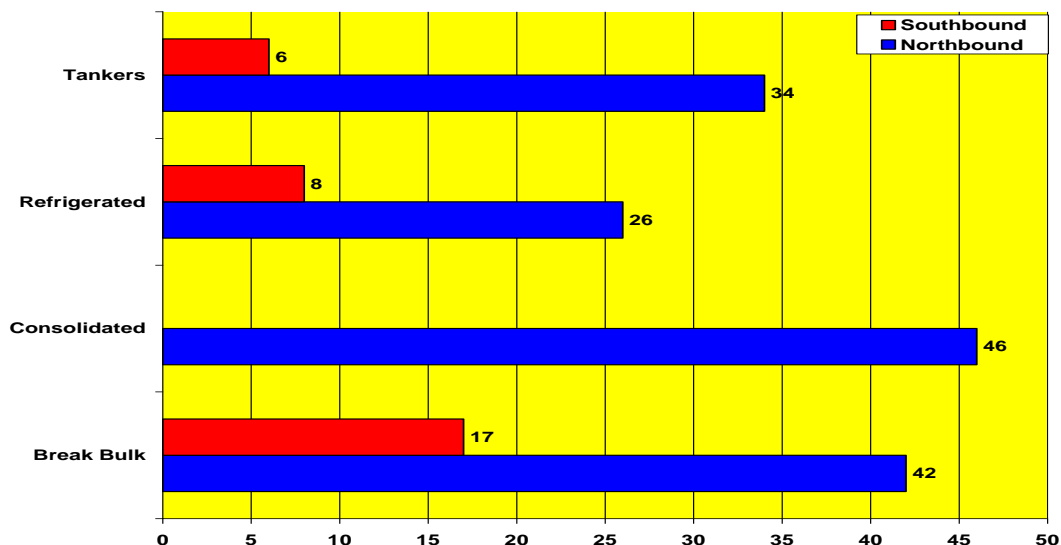
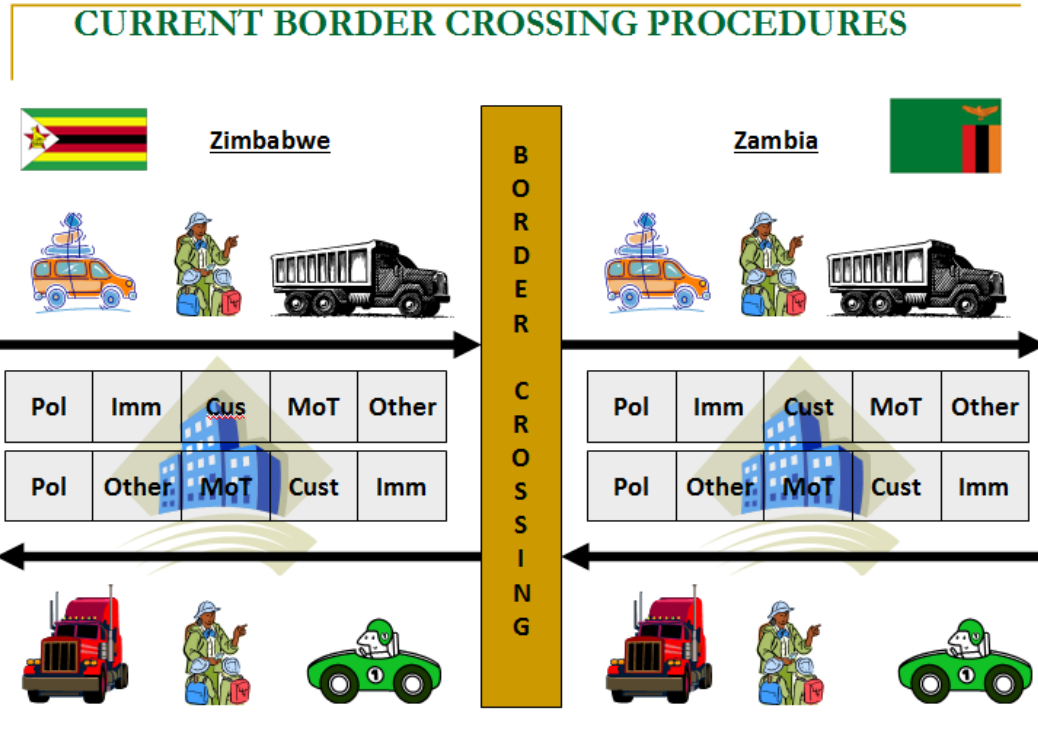


Figure 1: Average Transit Times Through Chirundu (hours)



A key cause of lengthy transit times is the inordinately long procedures involved in passing through two sets of identical controls on each side of the border.

Currently, a typical border point operates with two separate controls in each respective territory. The arrangement is normally set out as depicted in the graphic below:



**Figure 2: Current Border Control at Chirundu**

Chirundu border has over 15 government agencies in total for both governments enforcing various pieces of legislation. The business community is required by Law to comply with all the various pieces of legislation separately on both sides of the border. The requirements by both countries are, however, largely the same.

The current process is highly duplicated and cumbersome and inevitably leads to delays and confusion at the border. In the sketch above there is Police (Pol), Immigration (Imm), Customs (Cus), Ministry of Transport (MoT) and others which includes but not limited to Bureau of Standards, Drug Enforcement, Ministry of Agriculture (phyto sanitary controls), Ministry of Health and Road Traffic Commission present at the border.

**How the Model Works**

The OSBP model aims at reducing the duplication caused by dealing with two identical sets of agencies by having juxtaposed facilities for authorities on either side, with each juxtaposed facility handling traffic going in only one direction on either side of the border. Thus northbound traffic will be dealt with on either the Zambian or Zimbabwean side, by officials from both authorities, and the same shall apply for southbound traffic. The graphic below outlines the concept of the OSBP:



# One-stop border procedures - Proposal

Cross-border movements from Zimbabwe to Zambia and from Zambia to Zimbabwe :  
Juxtaposed facilities

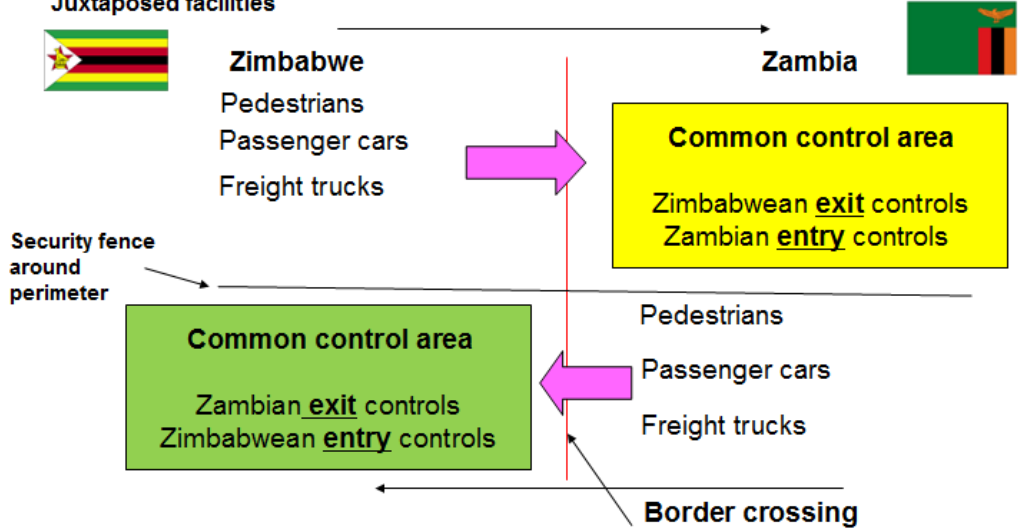
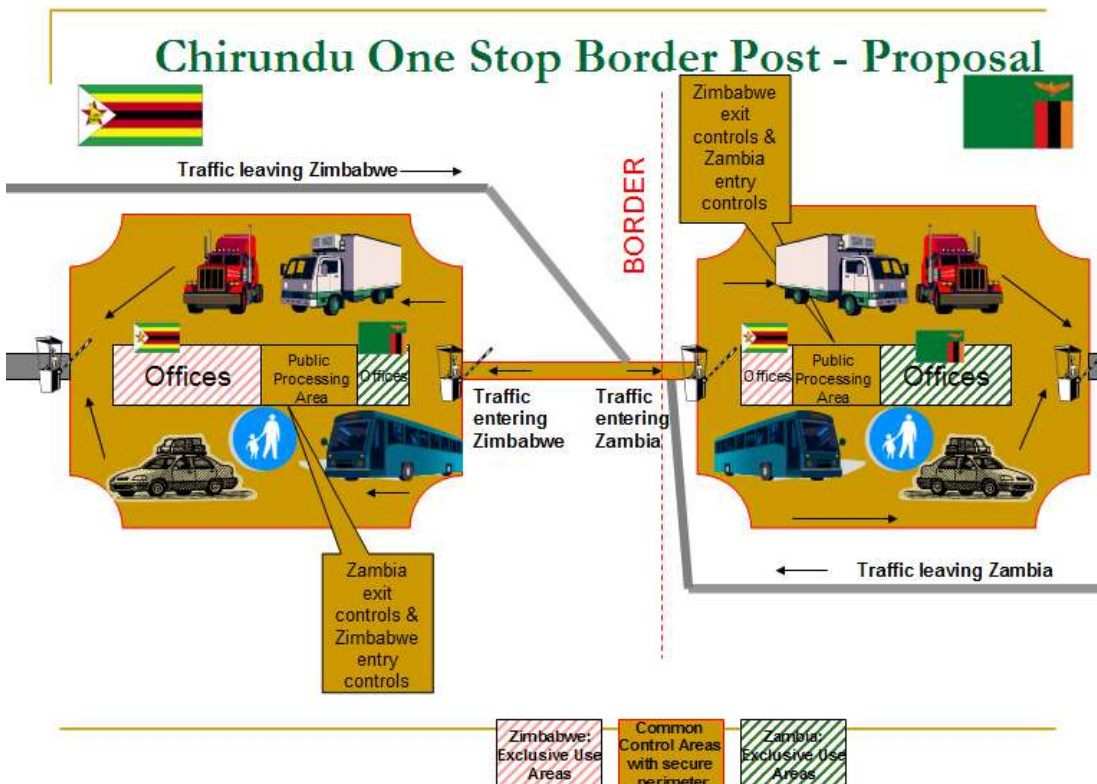


Figure 3: Proposed One-Stop Border Control Model

## Configuration of OSBP





## Opportunities: Why an OSBP Would Work Now



The border facilities on both the Zambian and Zimbabwean side have undergone extensive rehabilitation. The new Chirundu bridge has been completed and commissioned, while the Zimbabwean freight terminal is already in operation,



housing freight inspection facilities, and border agency offices. The Zambian freight terminal is expected to be finalised by end of August 2007. The construction and commissioning of this new border control infrastructure offer the opportunity for juxtaposed facilities to be incorporated on either side of the border.

Further, the project is being implemented at a time when trade facilitation at both global and regional levels is being high profiled. This has attracted strong political support from the two governments, financial support from donors and technical support from COMESA Secretariat.

### **Achievements So Far On Chirundu OSBP**

1. Very strong political support from the two governments
2. Private sector support (importers, agents and transporters)
3. Formation of four result oriented Sub Committees (procedures sub committee, legal sub committee, it sub committee and facilities sub committee)
4. Approved program of work by the joint steering committee
5. Bilateral Agreement finalised and signed by the two governments
6. Draft Bills to legislate OSBPs approved by Cabinet and tabled before parliament in both countries
7. Identification of a consultant to work with the project manager, procedures sub committee and the legal sub committee in designing chirundu OSBP procedures.
8. Finalisation of terms of reference for the IT consultant to help in getting an electronic link of the systems between the two countries. Currently head-hunting for a capable consultant.



## **Chirundu Project – Process of Implementation and Lessons Learnt**

The project management adopted a consultative approach through broad-based stakeholders' meetings. Three Stakeholders' meetings involving the public and the private sectors were held in 2005, 2006 and 2007. The objective was to provide details of the project to key stakeholders and engage them in the process.

The COMESA Secretariat, through the Regional Trade Facilitation Program with the support of DFID, appointed a dedicated Project Manager in February 2007 to drive the project. The objective is to ensure complete focus and coordination of the Project. The Project Manager also acts as a coordination focal point for the donor agencies supporting the Project.

Through Stakeholders Meetings, the structure of the Project was established and a Work Plan Agreed.

The highest decision-making body of the Project is a Steering Committee that is composed of Permanent Secretaries from all government agencies present at the border and private sector representatives from the business community in both countries.

To ensure delivery of the Project result-oriented Sub Committees designed to deliver specific components of the project were established as follows:

- (a) Procedures Sub Committee, tasked to develop one stop border post procedures in conjunction with consultants and stakeholders
- (b) Legal Sub Committee, tasked to develop the one stop border post legal framework in conjunction with consultants and stakeholders
- (c) Facilities Sub Committee, tasked to ensure that facilities at the border are adequate and properly shared between the two countries in a one-stop set up
- (d) Information Technology Sub Committee, tasked to develop IT solutions in conjunction with consultants and stakeholders that should enhance efficiency in a one stop border set up.

The major reason for forming these Sub Committees was to avoid aligning committees along border functions but instead the sub committees were focused on specific deliverables critical to the success of the project. With a time-bound work program, the sub committees are compelled to implement their agreed activities as scheduled.

The other critical success factor was getting the public sector and the private sector agreeing at national level in each country before bringing the two countries together at a bilateral level.

Given that there were misunderstandings in each country regarding general border management approach, control regimes and facilitation, the project management decided to facilitate national steering committees in the two countries as a build up to the Joint Steering Committee.

The national steering committee meetings enabled the public sector and the private sector in each country to deal with their internal issues and bridge their gap before engaging each other at a bilateral level.



This proved extremely useful in uniting delegates behind their flags and avoiding internal differences to disrupt smooth negotiations between the two countries.

Site visits during the stakeholders' meetings were equally useful in the sense that participants were being given an opportunity to appreciate the challenges at the border and the urgency to do something about it.

Pro-active engagement of the media and maintaining good rapport with them in both countries has helped to market the project to the business community and ordinary citizens.

Constant and effective communication on developments on the project to all stakeholders has kept the process live and kept all stakeholders almost permanently engaged in the process.

Political support has been very critical in the rapid progress so far made on the project. The project manager spent sometime explaining the benefits of the project to politicians in key ministries and senior government officials in both countries. This is important because the actual implementation of the OSBP depends on an enabling legal framework which only politicians can deliver.


The support of the local community at Chirundu border has been critical. This has been achieved through local inter-government agency committees comprised of all heads of government agencies operating at the border. With Customs Managers on both sides of the border taking the lead in explaining the project in these meetings, the Project Manager has constantly been in touch with major players on the ground.

Finally, lessons from other similar projects on OSBP most of which have either failed or not operating as expected have been very useful in shaping and packaging the Chirundu OSBP Project.

### **Challenges Identified**

After signing of the historical Bilateral Agreement between the two governments, the project still faces the following challenges:

1. Actual passing of the OSBP law in both countries. While the signing of the bilateral agreement is an excellent opportunity, the actual granting of extra territorial authority to border agencies need to be backed by law in both countries.
2. Existence of many border agencies involved in the operations at the border. Between the two countries, we have over 15 government border agencies performing various control functions under different pieces of legislation ranging in focus on goods, people and security.
3. Harmonisation of documentation/forms etc
4. Changing the mindset of border staff and the business community to adapt to the new procedures

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5. Finding an appropriate Information and Communications Technology package that will address interface issues across the border between the two nations

### **Way Forward**

The Project will continue with the adopted consultative approach and pro-active engagement of stakeholders in order to deal with the above challenges.

A strict adherence to the approved work programme will is expected to help deliver the project before end of this year provided the Law is enacted in both countries.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that Chirundu OSBP project will serve as a model for other OSBPs in the region and other parts of Africa. At the current speed the project will be implemented as scheduled before end of 2007 provided the bills that are before parliament in both countries are passed this year.

**RTFP Document**

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