

Border post upgrades enhance efficiency

Border posts that function efficiently and focus on facilitating trade and expediting cargo movement are crucial for southern Africa to ramp up freight volumes on its corridors.

According to Tiago Pocinho, country manager for South Africa and Zambia at Rangel Logistics Solutions, numerous border posts have undergone regional development efforts to boost efficiency and streamline cross-border movements.

“The Beitbridge border post, linking South Africa and Zimbabwe, has been a focal point for potential upgrades and modernisation to alleviate congestion and streamline operations,” he said.

“Another significant development is the completion of the Kazungula Bridge, connecting Botswana and Zambia. The aim is to improve overall connectivity, reduce delays and enhance trade flows.

“Furthermore, significant efforts have been directed towards enhancing infrastructure and customs procedures at the Chirundu Border Post between

Zimbabwe and Zambia to facilitate cross-border trade.

“Similarly, linking South Africa and Mozambique, the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia corridor has undergone various developments to upgrade transportation infrastructure and improve logistics efficiency.”

Pocinho said measures to upgrade technology and streamline customs processes were continuing and were expected to positively impact various border posts, contributing to more efficient cross-border trade within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Border crossings have posed some of the biggest challenges to freight movement. The Beitbridge border has encountered significant

challenges primarily due to the overwhelming volume of daily traffic it handles, compounded by its status as the busiest border post in the region.

Serving as a pivotal transit point for vehicles bound for Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi and

neighbouring countries, Beitbridge grapples with a constant influx of traffic. The substantial flow of abnormal cargo passing through Zimbabwe adds to the complexity, with Beitbridge acting as a crucial

gateway for oversized or specialised shipments.

Furthermore, the border crossing is critical to facilitating trade routes to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) via Zimbabwe, adding

layers of intricacy to logistical operations and exacerbating existing challenges.

“The sheer magnitude of activity at Beitbridge underscores the need for ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure, streamline customs procedures and implement efficient logistical solutions. Addressing these challenges is essential to improving the flow of goods and fostering regional trade and economic development,” said Pocinho.

He said South Africa was on a positive trajectory despite its challenges, and Rangel continued to expand its footprint in the region.

“Since 2020, we have been intensifying our investments. We are expanding our fleet, constructing new infrastructure, establishing warehouses and clearance offices, and strategically positioning ourselves at key gateways across the region.”

With operations spanning South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, Rangel has recently expanded its presence by establishing offices with local teams in the DRC, Namibia and Botswana.

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SADC enhances logistics with multifaceted approach

Across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) landscape, many opportunities are emerging for cross-border logistics, driving economic growth and regional integration.

According to Tiago Pocinho, country manager for South Africa and Zambia at Rangel Logistics Solutions, a key focus is ongoing infrastructure projects across member states.

"Investments in transportation infrastructure such as roads, railways and ports are streamlining cross-border movements and boosting logistics efficiency. Notably, the overhaul and expansion of vital transport corridors, such as the North-South Corridor, are paving the way for better connectivity, shorter transit times and a surge in trade activities."

Pocinho said the development of the North-South Corridor was a critical initiative for the region. "This corridor connects South

Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and investing in improving road and rail infrastructure along it would not only facilitate the cross-border movement of goods,

it would also allow logistics providers to benefit from reduced transit times, lower operating costs and greater reliability in commercial operations," he told *Freight News*.

"The SADC region has witnessed significant strides in infrastructure development geared towards enhancing cross-border logistics. Notably, considerable investments have been channelled into upgrading the Port of Maputo in Mozambique. "These improvements increase

the port's capacity and enhance the efficiency of maritime transport, thereby bolstering the entire logistics network throughout the region."

He said the Lobito Corridor was another critical example of infrastructure development. "Investments in the Lobito Corridor – connecting the port of Lobito in Angola to the inland regions and neighbouring countries – demonstrate a commitment

to strengthening transportation networks. Rail and road infrastructure upgrades along this corridor facilitate smoother cross-border movements, enabling more effective logistics operations."

Pocinho said digitalisation was another vital development playing

a pivotal role in transforming cross-border logistics.

"For example, the implementation of electronic documentation systems at border crossings and within customs processes has been observed across the SADC region. These advancements contribute to streamlined clearance procedures, reducing border paperwork and delays," he said.

"Cross-border e-commerce has flourished, with examples such as the growth of online retail platforms that cater to consumers in the SADC countries.

"Logistics providers have responded by developing innovative last-mile delivery solutions and integrated e-commerce logistics platforms to meet the demands of cross-border online trade."

In terms of sustainability, initiatives like the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) showcase regional efforts towards a more sustainable logistics sector.

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