

Summary of Errors on TRALAC Chirundu OSBP Article

Url of original article: <http://www.tralac.org/2013/09/25/challenges-at-chirundu-one-stop-border-post/>

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Error Nr	Kind of error	Quote from the Original Article	Line Number	Correction or Supplementation	More information / Sources
1	Factual Error	“OSBPs differ from ordinary border posts in that a bilateral agreement between the bordering countries gives each country authority to enact its rule on the other country’s side of the border...”	19 - 21	This is Incorrect / unclear. The bilateral agreement provides for extra territorial authority which enables agreeing countries to apply their country Laws in the other state within a confined border area called the Common Control Zone (CCZ). It is not the entire border and it is not enacting its rule. It is existing national laws but within the OSBP legal provisions.	
2	Misleading information	“ Sources suggest that since the implementation of the OSBP, clearance times at Chirundu have been reduced to a matter of hours and that most vehicles are now cleared within a day.”	38 - 40	This is misleading. “A matter of hours” makes it sounds like 3 or 4 hours when it is more for commercial traffic. Please be exact on this issue - latest available data indicates that clearance times at Chirundu have been reduced to an average of 32 hours for commercial vehicles, with most commercial vehicles now cleared within 24 hours. Also – please be explicit and say which “sources suggest” what.	Data source: TMSA Traffic count study at Chirundu (2nd quarter 2013, coupled with ongoing GPS tracking data.
3	Factual Error & Incomplete / misleading Information	“In July this year, Chirundu experienced similar scenes as congestion at the border resulted in queues of commercial trucks extending more than five kilometres.”	51 - 53	Firstly, this happened in April, not July. It is also vitally important to give correct background on this issue, as it had nothing to do with faulty design or functioning of the border (a full report was produced by TMSA on the issue). The background is that this happened when there was instability in Lubumbashi and over 500 trucks returning from the DRC got stranded there. At the same time, there were some disputes between big transporters and DRC officials relating to payments. When this situation resolved, all the trucks were released at the same	TMSA back to Office Report – Fact-Finding Mission Following Chirundu Delays Official Minutes:

				<p>time and Chirundu ended up with unprecedented volumes to clear.</p> <p>This prompted TMSA to start talking to ZRA and ZIMRA on developing a response strategy to sudden unexpected rises in traffic. Stakeholders have now recommended that this issue must be tabled at the Steering Committee Meeting so that the two parties (Zambia and Zimbabwe) can agree on contingency measures that should be part of the agreed OSBP procedures for dealing with unpredictable rises in traffic.</p> <p>Potential initiatives which might be considered include manual clearing (data to be captured later), release of trucks to inland facilities on report orders and convoying, among others.</p> <p>So the parties involved are dealing with this risk proactively – which is not something you can glean from the original article, which makes it seem like the delays were due to permanent design faults rather than unpredictable risks.</p> <p>Let me recap the logic to make my point - In the article you first say the traffic volumes do not provide a sufficient explanation for the delays mentioned, and then go on to say that it is due to “additional challenges” stemming “largely” from the fact that Chirundu was not originally designed as an OSBP. You therefore say, in essence, that the delays of that specific event were due to the fact that Chirundu was not designed as a OSBP. This is clearly not an accurate reflection of the real events and challenges related to that event.</p>	<p>National Consultative Meeting Chirundu OSBP, Lusaka - 5 September</p>
4	Incomplete or outdated information	The joint committee established at this meeting found that the delays at the border were a result of increased commercial traffic passing through the border and the fact that Chirundu OSBP was only open to commercial traffic between 8am and 5pm, and not 24 hours a day like Beitbridge	56 - 60	<p>If you are going to mention the 24-hour operation issue, it is important to give updated information on this issue – which has been on the agenda of stakeholders for a while. The latest update is that, at a recent National Consultative Meeting held on 5 September 2013 in Lusaka, stakeholders reviewed the report done by TMSA in 2011 and unanimously agreed with TMSA recommendation to implement the increase in working hours gradually. They also agreed that before change in legislation which would allow for 24 hour operation is made, government agencies in the meantime should be made to comply with the current 6 to 6 opening hours catered for by law, for both passenger and commercial terminals.</p>	<p>Official Minutes: National Consultative Meeting Chirundu OSBP, Lusaka - 5 September</p>

		border post.		Consultations with Zimbabwe on this issue will take place leading up to the steering committee meeting.	
5	Factual Error	“Nevertheless, regardless of how big a role increased traffic and insufficient opening hours have played in recent delays at Chirundu OSBP – and anecdotal data does not provide strong support for the increased traffic argument – the smooth functioning of the border post faces additional challenges.”	61 - 64	This is untrue – the data for increased traffic is not anecdotal. There is data available from Zambia Revenue Authority to support the claim that traffic has significantly increased. The official statistic is that, over the past four years, traffic volumes at the border post have increased by 65% to more than 8500 commercial vehicles per month. Also, as highlighted in detail in error 4 above, the real facts of this event should be communicated to avoid being misleading – the general increase in traffic is well documented, but this event was triggered by unprecedented traffic volumes related to another unpredictable event – also well documented and also not anecdotal.	Zambia Revenue Authority data – confirmed by ZRA on 29 September following TMSA enquiry after TRALAC Piece was published.
6	False Statement	These stem largely from the fact that the Chirundu border post was not originally designed as an OSBP and was instead modified so as to incorporate the main features of an OSBP.	64 - 66	This is false. Challenges at Chirundu do not stem from the fact that it was not originally designed as an OSBP, although this is obviously ideal – as highlighted by TMSA in their original case study on Chirundu, published in 2011. Infrastructure modifications were made to accommodate changes. The fact that the OSBP was not originally designed as such is, in fact, a challenge that was overcome in the design of the OSBP and is certainly not what the current challenge and the delays in April 2013 “largely” stem from. The two issues are totally unrelated.	
7	Outdated information	“One of the most significant challenges currently facing operations at Chirundu is the lack of information and communications technology (ICT) connectivity between the Zambian and Zimbabwe The lack of connectivity between the two sides of the border has also prevented the designated ‘fast track’ lane from becoming fully functional.”	67 - 78	This was certainly one of the major challenges which had been resolved due to efforts by all stakeholders involved. TMSA facilitated and paid for fiber optic connection in the entire Common Control Zone in 2012. The gates and the fast track booth have been connected to the fibre optic cable. Currently ZRA and ZIMRA are working on procurement of hardware. Discussions on the use of the FAST LANE booth has been finalized with ZRA, following establishment of connectivity, at a recent National Consultative Meeting held on 5 September 2013 in Lusaka and steps are being taken to make sure the booth becomes fully operational soon.	

8	False and Outdated information without any clarification about sources.	Other challenges facing operations at Chirundu include a need for training of new border agency staff, significant downtime of the electronic customs systems, insufficient office space on either side of the border for officers from the other country and a lack of appropriate signage on the approach to the OSBP and inside the customs control zone	79 - 83	<p>This is false. There is plenty of office space in both facilities after OSBP modifications. For example, in the Zim facility, only one side is being used. TMSA trained trainers at the beginning of the OSBP and ZRA and ZIMRA have made OSBP operations part of the subjects on which they train staff.</p> <p>Transferring staff in and out of Chirundu is a necessary integrity promotion strategy by authorities but these officers are now being properly trained and oriented.</p> <p>Both internal and external signage has been done and paid for by TMSA. This was finalized in July 2013.</p> <p>Also – these “observations” are not backed up by any references or information sources. If you have observations of real issues at Chirundu, please clearly indicate your sources. If these are real issues, then they should be brought to the attention of relevant authorities and institutions dealing with Chirundu.</p>	
9		It is very important that, in the rush to proclaim the ‘success’ of Chirundu and to use Chirundu OSBP as a model for similar OSBPs throughout the region, these and other defects in the current operation of Chirundu OSBP are not simply glossed over.	84 - 90	<p>The conclusion here is unfairly negative as it is based on the various factually incorrect premises of the article. The word “defect” seems to suggest that the problems are due to irreparable design faults implying that Chirundu would not be a good model for other OSBPs. This is clearly not true.</p> <p>The conclusion also makes no mention of the ongoing efforts to address issues that arise from time to time and prevent issues through better risk management, and does not mention the various mechanism in place for this purpose. This omission makes it seem like the stakeholders are unaware of these “shortcomings” and are not doing anything to address them. This is misleading as meetings and consultations to resolves issues that arise are ongoing. Many issues have been resolved, as is clear from our responses to the article. No on is attempting to “gloss over” issues – in fact - there is an active and ongoing attempt by stakeholders to resolve the issues and to constantly learn lessons – which make Chirundu an excellent model for other OSBP in the region.</p>	
10	Omission	When mentioning Chirundu	This	We suggest you use the following text:	

		<p>successes, it's important to not only focus on large traders but to also mention how the OSBP has affected smaller traders. This is in fact one of the OSBPs greatest successes.</p>	<p>would fit well between lines 40 and 41</p>	<p>"The Simplified Trade Regime (STR) implemented at the border post has also helped improve the trade environment for smaller traders. The implementation of STR at Chirundu means that, depending on what small traders are moving across borders, they can enjoy duty free access with simplified documents.</p> <p>"Exemptions covering the commercial side were in place, and STR now brings some of these benefits to small traders. It has impacted them very heavily," says Clement Mulenga, Senior Collector at the border post. As evidence, he cites an increase in legal cross-border trade and revenue and, a decrease in transit times for small traders travelling by foot or by bus; waiting time at the border now rarely exceeds two hours, whereas before, it could take a whole day.</p>	
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