



SUCCESS STORY

Speeding up Customs Clearances

The single customs declaration reduces administrative burdens and transit times



Trucks moving through international transport corridors improve transit times with streamlined customs procedures.

The SAD 500 is designed to reduce the cost of moving goods along regional frontiers through a single customs declaration made in the originating country.

Photo: Southern Africa Hub

The movement of goods across international frontiers in Southern Africa has generally been characterized by high transaction costs, caused in part by differing customs transit procedures and documentation across countries.

With assistance from USAID's Southern Africa Global Competitiveness Hub, customs transit procedures were harmonized and a single administrative document, called the SAD 500, were developed and adopted along selected transport corridors. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and Southern African Development Community are now promoting the adoption of the SAD 500 in member countries.

The SAD 500 is a multi-purpose goods declaration form covering imports, exports and cross-border and transit movements, and it incorporates all the information necessary for advanced customs clearance and customs risk management purposes. It reduces paperwork and allows for quicker turnaround times with fewer errors, less confusion, lower costs, and improved trade efficiencies. The SAD 500 complies with international best practices and customs standards, with similar documents having been introduced throughout the world. It was successfully piloted in the trans-Kalahari corridor through South Africa, Botswana and Namibia and is now the only customs declaration document used in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. The SAD 500 is also being used in the Dar es Salaam corridor countries of Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia. Mozambique is in the process of adopting the SAD 500.

This customs transit document is currently being used under a manual environment among countries, and the customs administrations of the region have agreed to work toward transmitting it electronically across international frontiers to reduce transit times at border posts and eliminate customs fraud associated with false declarations.

USAID's Global Competitiveness Hub hosted a workshop in October 2007 to develop modalities for customs system interface, connectivity, data interchange and electronic transmission of the SAD 500 across international frontiers. Participants were encouraged to refer to the RADDEX computer connectivity program, designed and implemented by USAID's East Africa Hub, which connects different customs computer systems in East Africa. Final decisions on the electronic transmission of the SAD 500 were expected to be made in mid-2008.