



Dear Colleague,

The Southern Africa Business Forum officially launched the programmes of its Working Groups at a regional meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa on 13 April 2016. Represented at this meeting were the SADC Secretariat, SADC Member States, experts working across the SADC region and private sector representatives doing business in the SADC region.

Subsequent to the initial round of meetings, original group members are being supplemented by those with key interests and potential contributions to the challenges and opportunities in specific business areas in the region participated. These discussions are ongoing in the months leading up to the Second Annual SABF conference to be held in Mbabane, Swaziland in the lead up to the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

In preparation for the Second Annual SABF Conference, this Working Group Meeting has been convened. Please feel free to forward to a colleague if you are unable to attend.

RSVP to Matshidiso.Moilwa@thenbf.co.za by 22 July 2016.

Working Group Invitation

Corridor Development: Trade Facilitation

Date: 26 July 2016

Venue: NEPAD Business Foundation Tuscan Office Park, 6 Coombe Place, Building 9, Ground Floor, Rivonia, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2128

Time: 8:30 am Registration and Coffee for a 9:00 am Start

This Working Group aims to facilitate regional trade – a prerequisite for economic transformation, value chain development and growth in the region. It advances border cooperation and harmonization at key border posts, and assists the region in removing important non-tariff barriers highlighted by businesses. Important Transport and Development Corridors guide the work, as a geographical concentration enhances the impact of individual actions. During the next meeting of the Working Group, members will be updated on developments in three projects of the Group. There will also be opportunity to discuss new ideas and needs and to agree to additional action points.

1. Kasumbalesa Border Cooperation to Enhance Trade Facilitation Along the North-South Corridor;
2. Impact-Based Industry Lobbying at the Beit Bridge Border Post to Improve North-South Linkages; and
3. The Development of a SADC Simplified Trade Regime to Assist Small Traders.

The Kasumbalesa border post is the busiest border post of Zambia and the key outlet for trade among Southern, Eastern and Central Africa, extending the North-South Corridor into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). At the same time, Kasumbalesa is known for burdensome proceedings, illicit road blocks, precarious facilities for truck drivers, and a high number of security incidents such as robbery, personal injury and accidental fires – all of which are exacerbated if not caused by the very long waiting times. Together with Beit Bridge Border Post, Kasumbalesa has been identified as a priority for the SADC region, and in particular, for the North South Corridor Development. It is of particular interest to align the post's operating hours with the Corridor and to enhance border cooperation. Following facilitation by the SADC Secretariat, the two countries are now designing appropriate interventions with the custodian of the Working Group.

The Beit Bridge border post, situated on the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe, is the busiest regional transit link in Southern and Eastern Africa and the main connecting point between the port of Durban and the North-South Corridor connecting countries. The lack of implementation of a one-stop-border-post and a single window results in significant delays, increasing the price of consumer and intermediate goods. Recent developments have further exacerbated the situation, while also creating a highly sensitive political environment. Against that background, impact-based industry lobbying that highlights the situation's implications for trade along the entire Corridor is deemed most effective, and the SADC Secretariat has agreed to facilitate the process and dialogue.

Simplified Trade Regimes (STR) are advocated by the World Trade Organization as a means of simplifying small traders' access to regional preferential tariffs, by exempting them from burdensome rules or origin and other documentation requirements. Following complaints by forward traders, SADC Ministers agreed to the development of a regime for the SADC region, though Member State negotiation positions on the subject still differ. In designing the system with its benchmarks and rules, private sector input is thought to best address industry needs.