



**A Meeting of the Tripartite (COMESA-EAC-SADC) Senior Officials on
The Tripartite Vehicle Load Management Initiative
Gaborone Sun Hotel
Gaborone, Botswana
12th November 2014
Record**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Senior Officials noted that their meeting was preceded by a Tripartite Technical Workshop on Vehicle Load Management Initiative which took place from the 10th to 11th November 2014.
- 1.2 The main objectives of the Technical Workshop were to:
- (i) develop a Tripartite Strategy and Implementation Plan for the synchronised and coordinated implementation of agreed measures focused at supporting Member States to implement the legislative, policy, regulatory systems and standards at national and corridor level necessary for ensuring harmonised vehicle overload controls in the Tripartite region;
 - (ii) Identify regional regulatory frameworks that need to be developed in order to underpin the proposed vehicle overload control strategy;
 - (iii) Identify and specify technical assistance,... capacity building and institutional development requirements to implement the strategy at both national and regional levels; and
 - (iv) produce resolutions, to be considered by Senior Officials, on the draft VLM Strategy and implementation plan in particular on policy, legal, regulatory, and institutional measures at national, corridor and regional levels in the Tripartite region.
- 1.3 The workshop was attended by participants from COMESA, EAC and SADC Member/Partner States. The following Member/Partner States from the Tripartite region were represented include Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopian, Kenya, Malawi,

Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Representatives of Sub Regional Organisations and Corridor Management Institutions (ASANRA, FESARTA, FCFASA, SACU, Dar es Salaam Corridor, MCLI, NCTTCA, and TKC) also attended the Workshop. A Representative of IGAD and a Team of Consultants were also in attendance. COMESA, EAC and SADC Secretariats facilitated the Workshop. The Meeting was supported by EU who also attended the Workshop.

1.4 The Workshop covered three main themes:

- (i) Vehicle Load Management Initiative in ESA Region- Background and Status of Implementation;
- (ii) Overview of the Tripartite Vehicle Load Management Initiative; and
- (iii) Draft Tripartite Vehicle Load Management Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Workshop Deliberations

2. Vehicle Load Management Initiative in ESA Region- Background and Status of Implementation

2.1 The Workshop noted the primary decisions and approvals by Ministers responsible for Transport at the following meetings:

- (i) Resolutions emanating from regional workshop organized by SSATP/UNECA/COMESA/EAC/SADC and held in Nairobi, Kenya in May, 2008;
- (ii) Meeting of Ministers responsible for transport in SADC and held in Swakopmund, Namibia in May, 2009; and
- (iii) Third meeting of COMESA infrastructure Ministers held in Djibouti in October, 2009.

2.2 The above meetings have approved the following:

- (i) ESA Inter-REC standardised vehicle and axle/axle unit load limits as follows:

Steering	Single		8000 kg
Non-Steering	Single	Single tyres	8000 kg
		Dual tyres	10,000 kg
	Tandem	Single tyres	16,000 kg
		Dual tyres	18,000 kg
	Tridem	Single tyres	24,000 kg
		Dual tyres	24,000 kg

- Permissible maximum combination mass 56 000 kg
 - The introduction of a Bridge Formula as follows: $P = 2 100 \times L + 18 00$
Where P = Permissible mass (kg)
L = distance (m) between the centres of the outer axles of any group of consecutive axles
 - Mass Tolerance: 5% on axle, axle unit, vehicle and vehicle combination mass;
- (ii) No quadrem axle units;
 - (iii) Only one axle or axle unit per semi-trailer
 - (iv) Allow lift axles with vigilant enforcement coupled with punitive measures for non- Compliance
 - (v) A desk-top study be carried out to determine recommended load limits for axles fitted with “super single” (wide-based) tyres based on tyre width categories; e.g. <350 mm, 350 to 400 mm; >400 mm;
 - (vi) Tag axles should be treated as part of an axle unit, but should be weighed separately.
 - (vii) Interlinks (truck-tractor plus two semi-trailers) should be accepted throughout the region provided that they have no more than two articulation points and a maximum length of 22 m;
 - (viii) Weighbridge verification intervals should be no longer than 12 months with interim routine checks
 - (ix) Auditing of weighbridge operations to be carried out at least annually;
 - (x) Overloading offences should be decriminalised and replaced with an administrative system incorporating fees;
 - (xi) Level of fees to be based on the recovery of road damage costs;

- (xii) The three RECs to develop and facilitate the implementation of a harmonised data management system;
- (xiii) The three RECs to adopt the SADC MOU and MLP on Vehicle Loading and Member States to review their overload control regulations and ensure compliance with the MOU and MLP;

(xiv) Weighbridge Infrastructure and Equipment

- The three RECs to develop a strategic regional network of overload control stations on the major transport corridors; and
- Member states should select appropriate weighbridge types based on traffic volumes, using the guidelines.

(xv) Enforcement and Weighbridge Operations

- The private sector participates in the operations and maintenance of weighbridges.
- A cross-border overload control system linked to customs be introduced at all border posts along the regional corridors.
- The three RECs to introduce harmonised regional Weighbridge Clearance Certificates.
- The three RECs to adopt a policy to promote self-regulation and accreditation and its introduction to member states.

(xvi) Institutional Arrangements

- The three RECs to support the relevant SROs in their management and implementation of overload control programmes.
- Member states to establish dedicated overload control enforcement units.

(xvii) Human Resources

- The three RECs to pursue the establishment of a regional training centre for overload control utilising existing training facilities where possible.
- The three RECs to adopt a common syllabus for overload control training.
- Member states to ensure that overload control personnel are adequately trained.
- Member states to ensure that overload control personnel are accredited.
- The three RECs to design and facilitate the implementation of anti-corruption programmes.

(xviii) Public Awareness

The three COMESA, EAC and SADC, Sub regional organisations and member states to engender awareness of the importance of overload control by publishing brochures, leaflets and installing information signs; etc. as well as through community and national radio stations and websites.

2.3 The Workshop also noted the decisions of the EAC made through the EAC Vehicle Load Control Act, 2013 that was approved by the EAC Multi-sectoral Council of Ministers meeting held in Nairobi in February, 2014 and is awaiting signature by all EAC Heads of State which led to the following additions/alterations:

- (i) The adoption of 8.5 tonnes for a 385 mm Wide-based tyres;
- (ii) The adoption of a zero per cent tolerance on GVM/GCM; and
- (iii) The acceptance of inter-link vehicles in addition to other types of vehicle combinations.

2.4 The Workshop further noted that a Study on Vehicle Overload Controls commissioned by the Tripartite supported by The DFID/TMSA conducted by Aurecon proposed a strategy for the Tripartite based on the following four pillars:

- (i) Integrated regional and national institutional Frameworks;
- (ii) Harmonised legal instruments for Implementation of Vehicle Overload Control;

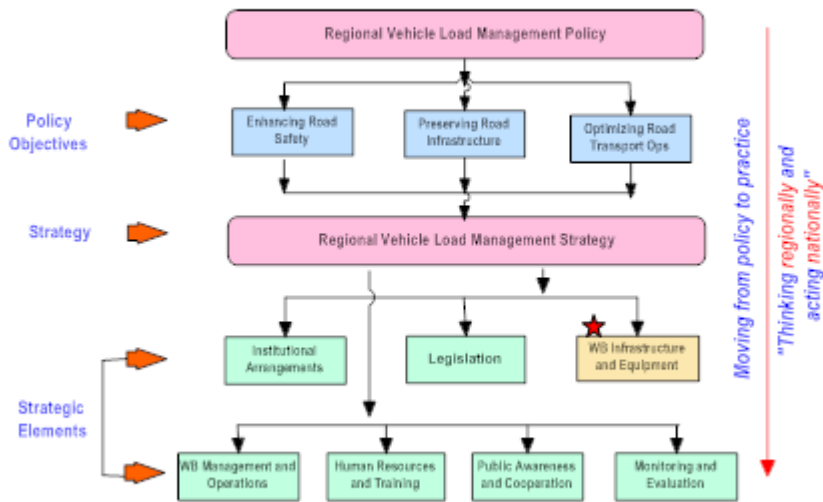
- (iii) Joint planning of network of facilities; and
 - (iv) Mutual recognition of weighbridge certificates and electronic linking of weigh stations.
- 2.5 The Senior officials recognised the historical evolution and convergence process concerning VLM in the Tripartite region as summarised in Annex 1.
- 2.6 The Senior Officials noted that the findings and recommendations of the Study on Vehicle Load Controls which were validated by the Technical Officials were informed by the historical process and formed the basis of the development of the Tripartite Vehicle Load Management Strategy and Implementation Plan.

3. THE DRAFT TRIPARTITE VEHICLE LOAD MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

- 3.1 The Workshop observed that currently, there is no comprehensive, overarching regional policy and related strategy on Vehicle Load Management (VLM) in the Tripartite region. Such a policy and strategy are urgently required to provide the essential framework within which VLM can be carried out efficiently and effectively.
- 3.2 The Proposed Tripartite Vehicle Load Management Initiative aims to:
- (i) Preserve road infrastructure (roads and bridges);
 - (ii) Enhance road traffic safety; and
 - (iii) Optimise road transport operations (including fair competition between modes and operators (“level playing field”).
- 3.3 The key elements of the Tripartite VLM Initiative are as outlined below:



Enabling Framework for VLM



4. Draft Tripartite Vehicle Load Management Initiative (VLM) Strategy and Implementation Plan

Draft Tripartite VLM Strategy

4.1 Policy Enabling Framework

4.1.1 The Workshop noted that:

- (i) In many Tripartite countries there is a lack of an appropriate enabling framework for VLM. Such a framework is not only essential for creating the enabling environment within which the role players in the system can view their roles with respect to VLM but, also, for sending out signals, through its policy principles and objectives, which are translated into the legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks governing VLM;
- (ii) There is often neither a coherent Government policy on VLM in place nor a full appreciation in Ministries of Finance of the adverse impact of overloading on the economy. As a result, low priority is given in many countries to the importance of VLM; and
- (iii) There is still a lack of awareness in some ESA countries of the Tripartite REC proposals on VLM.

Decisions

4.12 The Senior Officials endorsed the following recommendations on Policy Enabling Framework:

- (i) All countries that do not have an appropriate enabling framework for VLM need to consider establishing one. This should be achieved through a participatory approach involving both public and private sector stakeholders. National issues on VLM should be viewed within a broader regional context and framework in terms of “thinking regionally, acting nationally”;
- (ii) Continuous dialogue should be maintained between public and private stakeholders (e.g. transporters associations) in order to sensitise them to the price that the country is paying for ineffective VLM and to obtain their full support for implementation of an effective VLM policy. In order to achieve such support, it is important to quantify and then to highlight to stakeholders the substantial benefits to be derived from implementing such a policy; and
- (iii) ASANRA and other similar sub-regional bodies such as FESARTA, FCFASA and FEAFFA, should engender awareness amongst their members of the existence and importance of the REC proposals on VLM, which should serve as a point of departure for implementation in all countries in all RECs.

4.2 Institutional Arrangements

4.2.1 The Workshop observed that an institutional arrangements are pre-requisites for effective implementation of agreed strategies on vehicle load management at the Tripartite, Regional and National levels.

Decisions

4.2.2 **The Senior Officials:**

- (i) **endorsed the institutional arrangements outlined below; and**

(ii) noted that the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements for effective VLM will be assessed and upgraded as necessary.

Institutional arrangements for VLM

Level	Function	Organizational Body	Organizational Entity
1. Regional	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation 	Various Tripartite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of State • Council of Ministers • Sectoral Ministerial Committees
	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational 	Various Tripartite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee of officials • Member states • Secretariat • Tripartite Working Group on VLM
2. Sub-regional	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination 	Various Sub-regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASANRA • ARMFA • FESARTA • FCFASA, FEAFAA • Corridor Management Institutions (CMIs) • Other regional bodies (e.g PMAESA)
3. National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Formulation • Project Implementation 	Various National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gov't ministries/departments responsible for policy ○ Gov't ministries/departments responsible for road infrastructure ○ Gov't ministries/departments responsible for law enforcement ○ National VLM advisory committee (ppp) ○ CMIs

4.3 Legislation and Regulations

4.3.1 The Workshop noted that the achievement of a regionally harmonized approach to vehicle load management in the Tripartite region requires that, in principle, the legal requirements be also harmonized. Such requirements can be based on those developed recently for the EAC, and included in the EAC Vehicle Load Control Act, 2013 that was

approved by the EAC Multi-sectoral council of Ministers at a meeting held in Nairobi on 17th February 2014. These legal instruments embody the regional vision for VLM including the latest developments.

Decision

4.3.2 The Senior Officials were invited to direct the Tripartite RECs to convene a meeting of the Tripartite Technical and Legal Experts to consider and validate the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Tripartite Members with the objective of implementing the VLM Strategy

4.4 Weighbridge Infrastructure and Equipment

4.4.1 The Workshop noted that effective and efficient vehicle weight control operations in the Tripartite region require the following:

- (i) The selection of appropriate types of static weighbridges and portable/mobile scales for enforcement purposes;
- (ii) The adoption of an appropriate layout of the weighbridge facility; and
- (iii) The development of a network of overload control stations located at strategic points on the main regional corridors Tripartite road network.

4.4.2 The Workshop also observed that the adequacy of weighbridge infrastructure currently deployed on national road networks in the Tripartite region varies significantly. In some countries, this infrastructure is either insufficient, in terms of providing adequate coverage of national road networks, or inadequate in terms of being either unreliable/inaccurate or non-functional. In contrast, in some other countries, state-of-the art Full Traffic Control Centre facilities are being established.

4.4.3 The Workshop further observed that what is of concern is that, in the absence of a regional weighbridge location plan, expensive weighbridges may be being installed in non-strategic locations along regional corridors.

Decisions

4.4.4 The Senior Officials considered and endorsed the following recommendations:

- (i) Any future planned investment in weighbridge infrastructure should be undertaken in the context of a regional weighbridge location plan covering all strategic points on regional corridor routes from the gateway port to origin/destination on the regional trunk network;
- (ii) the Tripartite RECs are directed to develop a regional weighbridge location plan to be annexed to the Tripartite VLM Strategy and Implementation Plan;
- (iii) When new border facilities are being planned, provision should be made for sharing the weighbridge facility between the adjacent countries;
- (iv) Location of weighbridges in ports, inland container depots and freight stations and the role of authorities managing ports, inland container depots and freight stations in Vehicle Overload Control should be defined and enhanced as these are critical nodes for the enforcement of VLM standards and regulations;
- (v) Careful consideration should be given to selecting the most appropriate type of equipment and choice of weighbridge facilities in relation to such factors as the volume of commercial traffic to be weighed;
- (vi) As far as possible, weighbridge equipment should be standardised, or at least harmonised, on the main corridors of the region in order to facilitate training activities; and
- (vii) Each country should undertake an inventory of its weighbridge stock in order to determine its future requirements in relation to the regional weighbridge location plan.

4.5 Weighbridge Operations and Management

4.5.1 The Workshop noted that current weighbridge operations in many Tripartite countries are deficient in a number of respects including:

- (i) There are no operations and maintenance manuals with the result that weighing operations are carried out in an inconsistent manner and there are reported frequent breakdown of scales due to lack of spares;
- (ii) Weighbridge stations are not networked and there is limited analysis, reporting and sharing of information on overload control at national level and none at regional level;
- (iii) There is no mutual recognition of weighbridge certificates amongst Tripartite member states;
- (iv) Calibration of weighbridges is not carried out in a rigorous manner, including the provision of a certificate of calibration – which, subject to proper prior verification of the weighbridge, legalizes the output of the weighing operation; and
- (v) The quality and extent of data that is collected at weighbridges varies enormously amongst ESA countries and what is collected is not shared on a regional basis.

4.5.2 The Workshop also noted that as regards the manner of undertaking weighbridge operations, increasing recourse is being made in some ESA countries to the involvement of the private sector utilising so far service, management and lease types of contract.

Decisions

4.5.3 Senior Officials made a call for an increased role of the private sector in the operation and management of weighbridges, using among others the following options:

Summary of private sector involvement options in VLM

Item	Service Contract	Management Contract	Lease Contract	Concession Contract	Full Privatization
Ownership	Public Sector	Public Sector	Public Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector

Financing Fixed Assets	Public Sector	Public Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector
Financing Working Capital	Public Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector	Private Sector
Duration	Short (1–3 yrs)	Short (5 yrs)	Medium (6–10 yrs)	Long (20–30 yrs)	Indefinite
Risk	Public Sector	Public Sector	Public Sector	Shared	Private Sector
Remuneration of Private Sector	Operation and management (O&M) costs	O&M costs	O&M costs and working capital	O&M costs, working capital and financing of fixed assets	

4.6 Human Resources and Training

4.6.1 The Workshop observed that:

- (i) there is currently little formalized training that is carried out in many Tripartite countries;
- (ii) what is carried out tends to be provided in-house in an ad hoc manner by the authority concerned; and
- (iii) as a result, the quality and competence of the weighbridge staff is variable and overload control operations are generally not carried out effectively and efficiently in many countries.

Decisions

4.6.2 Senior Officials approved the following recommendations:

- (i) all weighbridge personnel to follow a prescribed, harmonized training courses;
- (ii) designation of a regional training centre/s; and
- (iii) Adoption of a common syllabi that would ensure consistency in all aspects of training in overload control as well as mutual recognised qualifications.

4.7 Public Awareness and Support

4.7.1 The Workshop noted that there is still a general lack of awareness amongst the public at large,.... amongst transporters in some Tripartite countries, about the need for VLM and the negative effects of overloading on the national or regional economy. However, with the increasing involvement of such stakeholders in regional meetings where overload control matters are discussed, they are becoming increasingly conversant with the importance of vehicle overload control and, as a result, have generally become more cooperative towards the introduction of an improved overload control regime in the ESA region.

Decisions

4.7.2 The Senior Officials urged Tripartite Member States to design and conduct Public Awareness Campaigns to win public support for the new VLM procedures to be embarked upon.

4.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.8.1 The Workshop recognised the need to:

- (i) periodically monitor and evaluate status of implementation of the VLM; and
- (ii) Identify and select performance indicators to monitor and evaluate vehicle weight control operations in the Tripartite region.

Decisions

4.8.2 Senior Officials directed the Tripartite RECs Secretariats to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework, which includes mechanisms for incentivising member states, for implementing the vehicle load management strategy in the Tripartite region.

Draft Tripartite VLM Implementation Plan

- 4.9 The Workshop noted the legal and institutional frameworks in the REC and corridor agreements provide the basis for joint planning, decision-making and implementation, and determine the operational environment of the vehicle load management policy and strategy. However there are no VLM strategic implementation plans in the three RECs to guide member states in designing and implementing VLM at national level.
- 4.10 The Workshop developed the attached draft implementation plan. It was noted that the draft VLM Strategy required to be further developed by refinement of timelines, budget, and assignment of responsibilities to all key stakeholders including Corridor Management Institutions.

Decisions

- 4.11 Senior Officials:
- (i) noted the Draft VLM Implementation Plan; and
 - (ii) directed the REC Secretariats to finalise the Draft VLM Implementation Plan for their consideration in the next meeting.

5. The Road Map for finalization of the development of the Tripartite VLM Strategy and Implementation Plan and Budget (2015-2020)

- 5.1 Senior Officials noted the following road map for finalization of the development of the Tripartite VLM Strategy and Implementation Plan and Budget (2015-2020):
- 5.1.1 **Update** Draft VLM Strategy and Implementation Plan based on inputs from Member States ([December 2014](#));
 - 5.1.2 **Cost** the proposed activities and develop a budget and resource mobilization strategy ([February 2015](#));
 - 5.1.3 Convene a meeting of technical and legal experts to validate the draft MoU on implementation of Tripartite VLM Strategy (February 2015); and
 - 5.1.4 Development of the Regional Weighbridge Location Plan (March 2015); and

5.1.5 Consolidate and submit **VML Strategy and Implementation Plan and Budget and Roadmap for approval by Ministers (May 2015)**.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business

7. Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

It was agreed that the date and venue of the next meeting of Senior Officials will be decided after consultations among the three RECs Secretariats and the member states chairing COMESA, EAC and SADC

8. Closure of the Meeting

SADC and the EU made closing remarks congratulating the member states for their continued determination to conclude and implement the Tripartite VLM Initiative. It was noted the implementation of the strategy will address road safety, trade facilitation and regional integration. Member States were urged to maintain the momentum by accelerating implementation of agreed measures through nationally based strategies that will transpose agreed regional agreements.