

Systems collaboration facilitates smooth cargo flow

Improving service delivery by introducing user-friendly systems that will ultimately allow for smoother cargo flows across the continent is a priority for EasyClear.

The company is currently working with Transcom Services on a project that will assist with the FERI certificates required for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Once completed it would provide a value-added benefit to transporters and agents by enabling the certificate to be prepopulated and completed in advance, said Michael Henning, Easyclear sales manager.

"We are also working with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (Zimra) to integrate with their Asycuda solution," he told *Freight News*. "This is to integrate and provide advance notification of the road freight manifest in order to digitise this process and support efforts to reduce congestion – particularly at the Beitbridge border post."

According to Henning, this integration capability is already being exploited with revenue and customs authorities in Swaziland, Lesotho and

Namibia.

"As a founder member of the technical service providers' association (TSPA), Easyclear has been actively involved with trade at Beitbridge and extended an opportunity to our client base to comment on the new trade agreements policy and SADC-specific policies that were published. Subsequently, through pressure from trade, the South African Association of Freight Forwarders (Saaff), the Road Freight Association (RFA) and the TSPA amongst other interested parties, the implementation date has been postponed to allow for public comment."

Henning said poorly communicated and ill-conceived policy implemented without thought as to the practical implications and effect on trade remained one of the biggest challenges on the continent.

"Coupled with a lack of coordination or will to cooperate with other governmental agencies and stakeholders vital to the free flow and facilitation of trade along the trade routes on the continent, there are often significant delays at border

posts. This has been evident in recent weeks, and highlighted by the chaotic congestion at the Beitbridge border post, which is not uncommon along the northern corridor," said Henning. "However, when all parties worked together for the common good, things turned around for the better and the congestion was addressed quickly."

Henning said the lack of infrastructure remained a stumbling block – particularly in terms of

technology and connectivity. "Though this is fast improving, communication and cooperation with government agencies – particularly where integration with the relevant revenue authority solutions is required – remains quite challenging."

He said while risk was inherent for anyone operating on the continent, Africa continued to provide opportunity. "The return on investment is worth it."
