

MCLI Report to the SSATP General Assembly
Support of SSATP to the Maputo Development Corridor
Pillar A - Regional Integration DP3

When MCLI attended the REC TCC Meeting in Nairobi in November 2016 the organisation was teetering on the edge of a precipice; without much hope of being able to avoid the pull of gravity. Our private sector funders, under pressure from the 2015 downturn, reduced volumes, and consequently, reduced revenues, had seen the withdrawal of two of our key funders. We had retrenched all but two of our staff, and institution was in advanced discussions with the Board of the directors for its closure by 31 December 2016.

Following an informal but unintentionally dramatic discussion with the SSATP during the tea break on the second day of the meeting, a request had been submitted to the SSATP for a priority project which has been critical to the continuity of the organisation. The project has been the catalyst for a critical turnaround for the organisation.

The project has two outcomes:

1. A revised draft Memorandum of understanding which updates a 22 -year old MoU which addresses the following
 - a shift from infrastructure and trade route rehabilitation to a focus on trade and transit facilitation
 - the integration of public and private sector in an institutional arrangement which ensures the integrity and accountability of the role-players
 - the financial sustainability of the organisation
2. A five- year strategy which addresses the work of the secretariat to support corridor efficiency and which provides programs congruent with the development and corridor strategies of the three corridor governments.

The third component of the SSATP support is on the establishment of a Corridor Transport Observatory on the Maputo Corridor which enables the organisation, for the first time in its fourteen years of existence, to understand the detail of volumes, traffic flows, bottlenecks and critical information for lobbying for improvements and changes to processes, legislation and other key issues affecting efficiency on the corridor. It is a vital tool for us to be able to keep all stakeholders accountable and to ensuring that our interventions are appropriately incisive.

By the end of April 2017, we were in possession of a revised draft Memorandum of Understanding which was presented by the institution to the three corridor governments during the course of the following six months to September. The development of the MoU for

discussion, as well as the strategy document, was welcomed by the three governments as a starting point for engagement.

A study tour of key officials in the corridor ministries of transport to the Northern Corridor during May 2018 was critical in providing not only a visible example of the functioning of a corridor management institution, but provided necessary insight into the stakeholder engagement on the validation of the Transport Observatory Work being undertaken by the Northern Corridor.

The study tour enabled the participating officials to agree on a process for engagement on the contents and substance of the revised draft MoU, and this process was assigned agreed time lines for technical and trilateral engagement leading up to the ultimate goal of the signing of this MoU. The SADC Secretariat has committed its support to facilitating the trilateral technical meetings which will take place in September and in January/February 2019.

I must point out that the support of SSATP goes beyond the simple funding of consultants to do a job and produce good documents. Not only has it been a hands- on capacity building exercise for the institution, but the process involved in producing these documents added enormous value to the work of our organisation. It has, for the first time in many years, enabled substantive discussions on the more theoretical elements of the work which has added a richness and depth to the activities. It has also enabled MCLI to engage with its stakeholders on critical elements of the work of the institution, as well as to provide credibility for the funding partners of MCLI to rethink their commitment. It has also opened up various opportunities for the organisation to contribute meaningfully to policy and other discussions on a number of new platforms which have opened up possibilities of other value adding work to be undertaken.

The importance of shifting the current institutional arrangements into a formally agreed mechanism for corridor management cannot be overemphasised.

The support of SSATP has gone far beyond the obvious benefits of the actual project. There have been invaluable learning points, critical foundations laid for policy development and fundamental long-term cornerstones put in place for creating an enabling environment for continued, deepened regional integration in the south eastern region of this continent.

I thank you.