

1. INTRODUCTION

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in the SADC region, SARA members continue to transport the authorized essential commodities for trade and economic resilience within the region and through to the international ports within the published national and regional COVID-19 guidelines. SARA Members continue to oblige to the SADC guidelines as well as regulations issued by their respective governments. The SADC Member states cannot afford any compromise to the stipulated guidelines because the covid19 pandemic is being observed to be spreading and numbers are now being noticed to be on the rise in the SADC region.

SADC continues to issue Guidelines to facilitate and support SADC Member States in implementing the policies and measures to combat COVID-19 as recommended by World Health Organization (WHO), World Customs Organization (WCO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO). On the 23rd June, 2020, SADC issued an update on the SADC Guidelines on Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region During the COVID-19 Pandemic (**Annexure 1**). The update was necessitated by the following reasons:

- a. domestic, interstate and international travel have proven to be one of the main ways spreading the covid-19.
- b. the region has to allow safe trade and transport facilitation for economic growth while containing the spread of the coronavirus.

2. SADC MEMBER STATES COVID-19 STATUS REPORT

Below is the table showing SADC member states covid-19 status reports as sourced from the WHO corona tracker website as at 15th July, 2020:

Country	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Angola	541	26
Botswana	399	1
DRC	8,134	189
Eswatini (Kingdom)	1,434	20
Malawi	2,497	40
Mozambique	1,268	9
Namibia	864	2
South Africa	298,292	4,346
Tanzania	509	21
Zambia	2283	82
Zimbabwe	1064	20

Source: <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/za>

According to the WHO Coronavirus Disease dashboard last update of 15 July 2020, globally, there have been 13,150,645 confirmed cases of covid19, including 574,464 deaths.

3. SARA RAILWAY OPERATIONS AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

3.1 ANGOLA

- Executive Decree No.129 / Article 5, No. 3, which directs for the following:
 - Urban and intercity passenger transport services are limited to two frequencies, until further orders due to the control of COVID-19. That is one in the early morning and the other in the late afternoon, with a maximum capacity of 25 (twenty-five) passengers per coach;
 - Railway companies must create the necessary conditions to guarantee the operability of inter-municipal connections at national level services and transportation of cargo movement, loading and off-loading, local and interprovincial;
 - All passenger services must comply with the prescribed hygiene rules for people, sanitization/disinfection of carriages and railway stations.

3.2 BOTSWANA

Botswana Railways was declared an essential service provider due to movement of essential freight such as salt, Soda Ash, Fuel, Grain, Limestone & containers within and across the borders. BR's operations have to diligently follow the rules and regulations put forth by the government to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. To minimise the spread of COVID-19 virus, Botswana Railways have put measures in place to ensure all employees are safe and make sure daily business operations continues.

To assist in the Government Health Protocol, BR had to decongest the offices by releasing staff on leave basis upon 28 days of extreme social distancing from April 3, 2020 resulting in the premises being occupied by close to 60% staff compliment which was considered to be essential.

a) IMPACT OF COVID-19 TO BOTSWANA RAILWAYS BUSINESS OPERATIONS:

- Loss of revenue on passenger train since it was placed on suspension from April to date.
- Daily operations backlog and some operations being put on complete halt since some employees had to be released on leave basis whilst others worked from home,
- Freight movement was limited to absolutely essentials only.
- There was a reduction on intake of Botash products at Sasolburg and Natalspruit, and also shutdown of plant by key customer (PPC Slurry, SA) which led to low tonnages.

The first train post extreme social distancing for Morupule Slurry coal commenced on May 14, 2020,

b) MEASURES TAKEN BY BR AGAINST THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

- BR drew up a Management Response Plan in line with Government directives, and the Railway Safety Regulator requirements of the BR/TFR Interface.
- Releasing 37% of officers to go on leave
- Allowing 3 % of key personnel (essential) to work from home.
- Introduction of cleansing points at the entrances of all its premises for employees and visitors before entering the buildings.
- deep cleaning of each train before departure
- a new queuing system to ensure physical distancing
- ensuring all employees wear face mask during working hours.
- Purchasing and distribution of sanitizers, disposable overalls, masks and surgical gloves to be used by staff especially crews crossing the boarders,
- Daily recording of temperatures of employees when entering and leaving the premises
- Hand washing points placed at all BR stations
- Fumigation of all buildings and trains
- crew testing before boarding the trains
- Release of all Interns and graduate trainees

c) SUCCESSES RECORDED AMIDST COVID-19

- BR equipped employees with required resources to minimise the spread of the COVID-19 virus
- Paid employee's monthly salaries without failure
- Encouraged savings since travelling outside the country for meetings and conferences was prohibited and replaced by online meetings as well as video conferences

3.3 DRC

No information available

3.4 KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

Eswatini Railways commits to provide the essential services required on Goba and Richards Bay Corridors during this period and is therefore able to supply Fuel, Wheat and also move containers both from Maputo and Durban. Under Transit traffic, ESR is only moving rock phosphate which is used in making fertilizer. The main transit traffic commodity is magnetite and it has unfortunately not been classified as an essential commodity.

a) IMPACT OF COVID-19 TO ESR BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- ESR have lost a lot of volumes during this period but once the situation normalizes it will be restored because it was not moving altogether
- Only essential goods are allowed to move on rail therefore only able to move fuel, wheat and containers and also rock phosphate (for making fertilizer).

- The rest of the budgeted volumes have been affected by this lockdown making it difficult to achieve the targeted budget of 7.6m. Revised Estimate is at around 7.2 million tons for the whole year
- Loss of Traffic due to cessation of non-essential operations that was the source of traffic for ESR
- staff need to be able to work from home during this period therefore we need laptops with connectivity to the internet. They also need to be reachable via cellphones so airtime for all staff is needed.

3.5 MALAWI

No information available

3.6 MOZAMBIQUE

At the moment CFM is implementing certain rules as per the state of emergency currently in effect in Mozambique, including having at most half the workforce at work in the areas where this is possible, without negatively impacting productivity. CFM continues to offer the same level of service to all clients as before the coronavirus pandemic.

a) CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 TO CFM BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- No commodities are restricted from movement on CFM lines
- The biggest challenge is that not all mining companies whose commodities transverse CFM lines have their full complement of staff available to ramp up production to 100%.

b) OPPORTUNITIES OF COVID-19 TO CFM BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- The greatest opportunity is that railways' biggest competitor, road, is more restricted from free movement due to the rules with respect to travel in the different countries.

3.7 NAMIBIA

TNHL commits to continue offering its services on the Nakop, Gobabis, Grootfontein, Oshikango Namibian rail sections.

TNHL service provider has guaranteed that as soon as they get more supplies they will fulfil TNHL order for masks and hand sanitizer. However, there is severe pressure on this supply chain and it will be a while before it normalizes.

a) CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 TO TNHL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- TNHL needs financial support to avoid employees job losses during covid-19 pandemic period.
- TNHL requires technical and financial support for facilitating work system access for most employees to work from home and maintain flow of goods/service supply and,

enhanced coordinated effort of Executives, Managers and employees to ensure synergy and efficiency.

- TNHL inventory stores only has 35x5 litre containers of hand sanitizer.
- TNHL is also in need of gloves and masks

3.8 SOUTH AFRICA

TFR as of 3rd April 2020 commits to the movement of non-essential and essential goods following the amendments of the regulations as stated above. The amendments amongst others:

- permit the transportation of cargo from ports of entry to their intended destination, on condition that necessary precautions have been taken to sanitize and disinfect such cargo;
- permit essential workers to move between provinces and between metropolitan and district areas to travel to and from work.
- Require reassessment of operations for purposes of rendering essential services as defined.
- lifts the restriction of cargo movement out of the port precinct in accordance with the amendment contained in Regulation 11B(b)(iii)(bb).
- transportation of cargo and goods as set out in Part A to neighbouring countries are still permitted in terms of the Regulations.

In addition to all the essential services TFR's focus will be on:

- The integrated container logistics system mainly around the Port of Durban and the link to the economic hub in Gauteng – ensuring that the complex system remain efficient to enable the movement of priority and essential containerized goods; this includes the movement of non-essential cargo to City Deep, only for storage in order to decongest the Port of Durban,
- The heavy haul rail and ports export system from the Northern Cape to the Port of Saldanha; and
- Domestic and export Coal and other General Freight Business cargo through the Port of Richards Bay.

3.9 TANZANIA

- TAZARA suspended international passenger trains but continued with intra-region passenger trains where precautions as directed by the Governments of Zambia and United Republic of Tanzania. TAZARA has further expressed need for external support to implement preventive measures in accordance with the WHO standards.
- TAZARA commits to continue offering railway services to sustain regional trade. This is categorically emphasized for the following sections:
 - DR Congo – Dar port logistic supply chain is still operational
 - Dar port – Malawi supply chain is operational
 - Zambia – Dar port supply chain is operational

3.10 ZAMBIA

The Zambian economy is projected to grow at negative 2.6%, against a projected growth of 3.2% target for 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

ZRL Management has put in place a survival plan to ensure that the employees are kept safe and to ensure continuity of Business activities amidst COVID-19.

a) IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ZRL (JAN TO MAY 2020)

- Loss of freight revenue and traffic by 25% and 19% respectively, mostly attributed to the restrictive measures of National lockdowns across the globe
- 100% loss of revenue from passenger train services effective 6th April, 2020
- ZRL operated at about 35% of staff, with 65% working from home
- Some projects were put on hold, like Livingstone – Kazungula – Moseitse Railway connectivity Project

b) MEASURES TO MITIGATE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

- Increased movement of commodities that were not affected by the lockdown measures, such as coal, sugar and wheat.
- Exploiting opportunities that arose such as deviation of cargo from the North South Corridor to Dar es Salaam.
- Engagement of the ZRL Regions to take control of executing business orders available and ensuring conclusion of all business opportunities.
- Enhanced promotional efforts through advertisements to widen customer base.
- Enhancement of the monitoring of daily performance against projected performance.
- Operation of project trains, i.e. Sugar project train, and Chozi train.
- Reducing operating costs, without compromise on service delivery.

c) COMPLIANCE TO MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MoH) MEASURES AGAINST COVID - 19

HUMAN RESOURCE

In order to protect ZRL employees against COVID – 19, the following measures have been put in place:

- Communication and management strategies have been put in place to ensure less physical interaction among employees across offices. Tools such as emails, ZRL Caller User Group (CUG), and WhatsApp are being used for communication.
- Smart applications such as Zoom Cloud Meetings, Skype, Microsoft Teams, etc. are being used to conduct meetings.
- About 65% of employees were working from home until 1st June, 2020, when everyone was called back for work.
- Isolation rooms have been identified per station to respond to any suspected cases.
- Masks have also been provided for all ZRL employees across the system in response to the Presidential directive and Ministry of Healthy (MoH) guidance to ‘Mask Up’.
- Washing facilities have been placed at all stations.
- Employees are being provided with hand sanitizers

- Restrictions on access to ZRL premises by outsiders through the company's security personnel.
- Suspension of Non-essential travel and face to face communication by ZRL employees.
- Working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) through each District Health Office to ensure compliance to the health guidelines set by the Health Authorities. *No railway employee has so far tested positive of COVID – 19.*

TRAIN OPERATIONS

- ZRL has classified Sugar Trains as Special Trains, to be operated as a project. This will increase traffic through improved wagon turnaround and service delivery.
- An increase in demand for coal from Batoka to destinations within Zambia has been observed which is expected to also continue in the third quarter
- ZRL opened up another loading site within Zambia in Senkobo towards the end of April for loading coal, coming from Zimbabwe by road.
- ZRL continue to monitor the developments in the mining sector, with the continued impasse surrounding Copperbelt Energy Company (CEC)/Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) and the care and maintenance for Mopani Copper Mines (MCM) and Lubambe since these factors have the potential to affect ZRL performance.
- ZRL suspended Passenger trains on 6th April, 2020 following the difficulties to maintain the set health standards by the MoH. The most difficult guideline was to ensure minimum distance of one meter between passengers and this is due to the fact that ZRL has 75 stations across the system and only 11 stations are manned with access control in existence. The rest of the stations are in remote areas and control is a challenge. Subsequently, a total number of 69 employees, who facilitate the movement of about 14,170 passengers monthly, across the system, have not been called back for work, but are being paid their monthly salary. In addition, Management has been Disinfecting Locomotive cabs at all major operation hubs along the system, i.e. Ndola, Kitwe, Choma, Kabwe and Livingstone. This is being done to avoid transmission of COVID – 19.
- South Africa had declared a total lockdown and classified some of the commodities to be transported in the period as essential. The rest of the commodities not reflecting under essential were suspended from loading. However, the situation has changed now as there is gradual opening up with products such as Sulphur, Copper and fuels being allowed to move. This development will increase cargo movement on the North – South Corridor (NSC).
- Tanzania did not declare lockdown. However, the loading activity at the port was reduced due to the lockdown in originating countries. The situation has improved and Management projects further improvement in the third and fourth quarter as many economies begin to open up, under the 'new normal'.

e) Budget Impact

- ZRL has lost 25% of its freight revenue so far
- ZRL has lost 100% of its passenger revenue, in the COVID – 19 period.

In order to survive, ZRL has put measures meant to reduce costs, improve efficiency, protect employees' lives, increase traffic, etc. Further, management is still endeavouring to pursue new customers as a way to increase revenue base.

d) SUCCESSES RECORDED AMIDST COVID-19

- Managed to pay salaries throughout, with no Government intervention
- No employee tested positive
- Made administration savings, and a bit of operational savings.

11. ZIMBABWE

11.1 BBR

- TFR was not running any trains RCB-KTR-MES & MES-LAA-PRZ consequently leading to no traffic for BBR through the Beitbridge interchange point. Effectively meaning zero traffic into Beitbridge during the lockdown of 21 days in SA. There has however been an exceptional train of 20 wagons scheduled to arrive BBD on Monday 6 April 2020 as per Customer notification from TFR.
- Ports at Durban and Richards Bay are limiting commodities to be handled due to the lockdown at Terminal, Mines in DRC /Zambia, Rail operators (SNCC, ZRL, BBR). This is because some of mine inputs and outputs are deemed not essential commodities.