



Strengthening Migration Management Policy and Practice in Africa: Pre-event Workshop

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In conjunction with IBMATA, the United Nations International Organisation for Migration (IOM) facilitated an expert workshop on Migration Management Policy and Practices in Africa immediately prior to the first IBMATA (Africa) Summit in May 2023.

Effective border governance is critical for promoting regional integration and trade, ensuring security, and facilitating economic growth and development in Africa. However, there are many challenges to achieving effective border governance in Africa including institutional capacity building, transparency, and inadequate resources. Various initiatives have been launched to improve border governance in Africa, such as the African Union Border Programme which aims to promote cooperation and coordination among African countries. This chimes neatly with the overall objectives of IBMATA, which aims to promote collaboration and communication between both public and private sector entities at a global level on best practice in future border management and the intelligent use of technology.

The workshop did not focus on migration policy alone but on a wider range of border related topics including Customs and Logistics; Cyber Security; Infrastructure Security; Transnational Crime and Terrorism; and Immigration Inspection. Our expert audience comprising of representatives from IOM, IBMATA, Border Control Authorities from across Africa (including the South African Border Management Authority) and other subject matter experts were divided into 5 sub-groups to discuss the following key objectives:

1. **Key migration management challenges** that undermine the achievement of national and regional priorities.
2. Engagement with **different stakeholders** regarding their plans and contributions to strengthening migration management in Africa.
3. Building on **lessons learned from past successes and failures** to strengthen migration management in Africa.
4. To advocate for the collection and continuous use of **harmonised migration data**.
5. To develop **robust recommendations** through various technical considerations and develop **concrete ideas** for national and multinational action plans for migration management.

The key findings of the table discussions were recorded and are summarised here, for the benefit of our wider audience and stakeholders.

Table One: Customs and Logistics



Customs officials and logistics officers must work closely together to ensure that goods are transported safely and efficiently across borders whilst complying with all relevant regulations and maintaining border security.

Key stakeholders include those involved in the “Upstream Supply Chain” – that is, companies that provide products such as the trader / importer/ exporter; as well as logistics providers including the transporter/ customs agents / freight forwarders. On the government side, the key actors are those responsible for Border Control, regulatory agencies, and Customs Officers for Revenue collection. Recognizing that different countries adopt different approaches to integrated border management.

Challenges include increasing trade volumes; inadequate resources (staff, systems etc.); infrastructure issues (poor roads and border facilities - porous borders make this worse); systems interoperability (customs and border systems not effectively integrated); data sharing issues; lack of cooperation between agencies due to divergent interests/ mandates; and finding the right balance between facilitation and enforcement.

Successes include the implementation of One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), Smart Borders and Trade Corridors; the rollout of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) schemes; the implementation of National Single Window Systems; the adoption of Harmonized Tariff System & Common External Tariff among Regional Bodies; and the introduction of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Failures include the failure to implement AEO programmes in line with best practice (e.g., AEOs recognized by Customs only); lack of cooperation among some stakeholders (e.g. in the implementation of Single Window Systems); AfCFTA implementation failures (due to inadequate engagement of SMEs, lack of political will in some countries, rules of origin challenges and so on leading to lengthy discussions); failure to eliminate non-tariff barriers; and failure to follow international best practice such as the WCO data model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We need:

1. Adequate and effective stakeholder engagement for the successful implementation of Projects and programmes.
2. An enhanced adherence to good practices – this requires competent leadership.
3. Stronger AEO programmes - by adopting a government-wide AEO compliance framework.
4. A greater commitment to implementing AfCFTA and regional initiatives.
5. A re-engineering of processes for efficiency – including the smarter use of technology to deliver greater efficiency, transparency, and an enhanced ability to measure and improve processes.

Table 2: Cyber Security

Cyber Security refers to *“the practice of protecting an organisation, people and assets from malicious internal and external attacks or threats i.e., computers, servers, mobile devices, networks, electronic devices, data, processes, programmes, etc.”*

Key migration management **challenges** include:

- Data verification/quality of information – there needs to be a more effective and efficient means (system) through which information that is captured or shared, is accurate, verifiable, and trusted.
- Management of external and internal threats- there are those who are continuously searching for ways to manipulate systems for a number of reasons, and it is important that there is a full appreciation for the value of the information or data that organisations hold and that it is not used as a commodity.
- Implementation of Legislation – whereas there is an array of domestic, regional, and international legislation, the implementation of legislation or the standardization thereof, by various stakeholders in the value chain, remains a challenge. This sometimes emanates from the sense of ownership/entitlement that custodians have to this information; and their willingness to fully share it with others.
- Regional sharing of data – the lack of a centrally coordinated and integrated system that shares information across government (domestic & regionally).
- Recruitment, selection, and training – The ability to attract, train and retain skilled personnel. Training of officials on how to handle information received through emails, etc. is important (e.g., introduction of malware, etc).
- Confidence in the systems – the system must have watertight security capabilities to inspire trust and confidence. A customer should have confidence to share personal information (including credit card information) without having to worry that the information will be released to third parties or used for purposes for which it was not intended. Another aspect impacting upon confidence includes the use of private email accounts (Gmail, etc.) as a means of conducting business (i.e., those platforms are risky because the risk is managed by a third person whom the organisation may not have control over).
- Modernization of technology – sometimes it is too slow and other times it is too fast, without proper change management practises being implemented. Other challenges include the lack of an integrated system that captures all relevant information. Each department is the custodian of their own data.

Key **stakeholders** fall under three categories:

- Government Departments
 - > Border Management Authority, Police Services, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Transport, State Security, and Revenue Services (SARS).
- Private Sector/Business
 - > IT companies, Interest Groups (NGOs), Airlines, Cruise Liners, Bus Liners.
- Regional/International Roleplayers
 - > Interpol, ICAO, Other Government Departments (OGDs).

Lessons learned from **past successes and failures** include:

- Multiple and often parallel structures impacts coordination & collaboration. It has been proven that having a singular and central security command structure dealing with migration (e.g., border management agency) works better to streamline processes, systems, transmission of information and data, etc.
- Systems that are not integrated result in process and system vulnerabilities. For example, a person of interest may slip through simply because of the quality of data that is transmitted, the time that it takes to reach the relevant end users, etc. [You are only as strong and as your weakest link].

RECOMMENDATIONS

We need:

1. Harmonised data systems. ICAO has standards relating PNR information that must be captured by countries, and this should be extended to immigration systems. There should be a regional approach to the collection and sharing of data which would have beneficial value for all.
2. Policy decision/s to be taken to inculcate the practice of travellers sharing their information prior to arriving at a port of entry. For example, e-visa, regional visa arrangements, etc. are platforms by which information can be shared in advance.
3. To utilize only integrated and secure systems to collect pertinent information.
4. To establish an integrated stakeholder engagement framework with an emphasis on communication, collaboration, and security.

Table 3: Infrastructure Security

Africa is a continent with a very significant number of land borders, which all present challenges for border security, migration management, and traffic facilitation between countries.

Key **challenges** were identified as:

- Placement of physical barriers (walls, fencing, etc.) along the border lines between countries. Are these appropriate? If so, where should they be installed? What is to stop people walking around them or otherwise penetrating them?
- Segregation of function and services and demarcation of who should be there or not, who passes, and who gets stopped for checks?
- Lack of architectural designs to support border management functions and objectives. Planning on how to demarcate the border line, depending on the type of Port of Entry.
- Knowing who or what comes into or through the border via advanced data systems – much easier with air and seaports than with land border crossing points (BCPs).
- How to manage border communities where the border line runs directly through a town or village.

The relevant **stakeholders** are:

Border users (truckers, importers, tourists, travellers etc); Clearing agents; Other security agencies, including private security; Property maintenance; Government Departments, Border Communities.

Successes and failures include:

- Segregation of people types and traffic types can significantly reduce time spent at the border and this facilitates cross border trade and travel. Breaking down trade and traveler cohorts into categories also addresses wrong, false or false declarations.
- Information of travelers before reaching the border or coming into the country can help stop people and vehicles prior to reaching the border. The impact is to reduce the traffic reaching the border to those that are compliant which reduces congestion at borders- this simplifying the physical security requirements.
- Passing responsibility to border users to verify the contents of the truck should enable them to be taken to a fast lane, with penalties for noncompliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We need:

1. A system to identify and facilitate the rapid movement of daily commuters across the border.
2. Biometric dedicated lanes to be introduced with seamless security systems for pre-screened passengers and vehicles, coupled with technology that can submit data in advance for proper risk assessment.
3. Technology that supplements the physical structures (walls and fences) such as drones and surveillance equipment.
4. Sufficient border guards to patrol the border lines to deter illegitimate immigration.
5. Weigh in motion devices to sense overloading prior to getting on to the weigh bridge.
6. Elimination of the use of cash in the PoE to reduce bottlenecking congestion.



Table 4: Transnational Crime and Terrorism

Migration is a key issue for national security.

Challenges include people from other countries who may pose unknown security threats to the destination country. Irregular migration by people crossing borders without any travel document or visa also provides opportunities for terrorists and criminals.

The first challenge facing border agencies in dealing with these cases is identifying who they are. Many may not want to have their identity and nationality verified at the border in order to conceal material facts and evidence about their background and intentions. Ideally biometrics should be used to verify identity wherever possible but there is no global biometric store to refer to.

Another challenge is porous borders and the ability of criminals, terrorists, and smugglers to cross borders in between ports of entry thus avoiding border control altogether. Sometimes this is hard to manage where different agencies have different roles and responsibilities in the border regions.

Although desirable it would be challenging to introduce full biometric screening checks at all land borders without creating delays. Time is a challenge.

Exporting the border works well for those who are legitimate; but others will try to enter by other means and avoid checks completely.

There are additional challenges posed by human smugglers who can put lives at risk by concealing migrants in vehicles or placing them on flimsy vessels in the maritime domain.

The relevant **stakeholders** include border users, control agencies including police / immigration / customs / security services working in tandem with one another, border communities, regional authorities, and providers of surveillance equipment and first responders. This may include a separate border control or agency responsible specifically for patrolling the areas between the ports or the coastline, as exists in other countries such as the USA and India.

Failures include a lack of ability or resource to patrol long land borders in Africa and inadequate resources to invest in new infrastructure and technology to identify irregular movement across borders. Whilst efforts are underway to improve identity management in Africa many citizens do not have proper identity documents which leads to a proliferation of false travel and identity documents, or even none at all.

Successes are more likely to be found where the principles of integrated border management are at play. For example, the merger of various agencies to pool resources around border control (as with

the BMA) and develop intelligence led controls. Better still cross border collaboration between countries on either side who are jointly committed to ending irregular movements across their common border line.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some countries in Africa are already equipped with API / PNR / APP systems which enables them to conduct pre-arrival checks on passengers arriving by air. Others have introduced e cargo systems for risk assessing goods.

To go further, African countries **need to**

1. Look further afield at how these challenges have been addressed in the past in other countries, particularly where terrorists have defeated border controls to cause harm in specific attacks (eg 9/11, 7/7, Paris attacks etc). This will increase awareness amongst agencies of tactics used by terrorists in the past to defeat border control and how best to mitigate risk.
2. Develop “intelligence led” controls by acquiring data at the earliest possible opportunity for border crossers (preferably upstream) to profile travellers potentially providing a higher risk, for interventions.
3. Work across borders with other border agencies both in Africa and beyond, and with the UN, Interpol and other IGOs, to develop data sharing agreements and share intelligence.
4. To look further at integrating border management and systems across multiple agencies to assess risk.
5. To develop mitigation strategy for border surveillance and response systems, making best use of new and emerging technology deployed at borders elsewhere in the world.

Table 5: Immigration Inspection

Challenges to immigration inspection and control in Africa also relate to the geography of the continent and the ease with which people can cross porous land borders in multiple countries is a significant problem. However, the focus on land borders can detract from the significant risk to African countries with long maritime borders and coastlines, such as South Africa.

The maritime domain raises risks of terrorism, illegal fishing, trafficking of persons, smuggling of contraband. There are believed to be over 10000 large and smaller vessels in South African waters at any time – many with stowaways on ships, whose point of origin is unknown.

The capacity to patrol this very large coastline to conduct regulatory checks and enforcement is limited. There is a lack of technology to monitor sea border 12-mile zone and this has not yet been prioritized, although the merger of the coastguard into the BMA in South Africa should help in this regard.

Also, there are many communities straddling border line where people cross the border daily to attend work / school / recreational activity where no controls exist. Left unchecked, this is an area that criminals and smugglers may exploit.

Harmonization of ID across the continent is also a problem. For example, documents from places like Namibia and Zambia are not interoperable (i.e. not all biometric) and lack standardization.

There are insufficient resources in terms of border staff, especially in the border management authority, to conduct full checks including developing intelligence for profiling. Frontline staff face a huge set of challenges (immigration control, detecting crime etc.)

There is also a lack of scanners at the ports of entry and due to cost, these are not considered a priority for procurement.

Plus, the price of passports to encourage international travel is prohibitive with many people turning to irregular /undocumented travel instead.

The fragmentation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at BCPs, the absence of integrated border management and the lack of harmonization of databases between Customs, immigration and other agencies remains a challenge which is now being addressed in South Africa by the BMA.

Integrity remains a significant challenge, where bribery and corruption enables criminal gangs to infiltrate the border community. There is also a lack of consequence management of wrongdoing by officers at the border.

Cross border migration and refugee movement is also a challenge in South Africa. There is no policy to house refugees in camps so instead people move directly into communities without any real control. This causes competition for resources and can lead to community tensions.

Other challenges remain regarding the constitution, strategy and legislation.

The main **stakeholders** in the immigration inspection domain are the Border Management Agency (BMA), the South African Revenue Service (SARS), trade facilitation authorities, customs, Police services, Intelligence services, border communities, regional bodies, civil aviation authorities, Carriers/airlines/shipping companies (air, land, sea borders), Freight forwarders, and travelers.

In terms of **successes and failures**, lessons in South Africa have demonstrated that the application of a multi-agency approach to border controls has been very problematic. This has led to a multiplicity of operating procedures which have become cumbersome, thus affecting the smooth flows of both people and goods across the border. Furthermore, the misalignment between processes between neighboring countries have meant that delays on one side will inevitably lead to delays on the other side (e.g. processing trucks' crossings). These lessons have in part led to the creation of the BMA and a renewed desire to work with neighboring countries on joint BCPs.

That said, the creation of the Border Management Authority in South Africa provides new opportunities for Integrated Border Management. This includes standardised operational procedures all within one authority, and a single window view for both immigration and customs.

A "one stop process" for neighboring countries would enable Border Agents to process travelers once for entry/exit and exit/entry, and a pre-clearance / juxtaposed control arrangement such as the one that exists on trains running between the UK and Europe could help to minimize queues on arrival. A pre-registration system for vehicles and travelers would enable risk assessment to take place prior to arrival and away from border, in line with best practice and the multiple borders strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve immigration inspections in Africa, we need to:

1. Engage with industry including the transportation companies that bring people and goods to our borders, and financially benefit from doing so, to develop an investment strategy for smarter borders and simplified border crossings. This includes developing data sharing mechanisms and Trusted Trader systems, investment in infrastructure/technology, and development of pre-screening mechanisms.

2. Establish closer working between agencies. The new BMA will help with this over time and integration with the coastguard will help to identify and mitigate threats to the maritime border. This includes better data sharing and integration.
3. Put more resources toward investigation of border integrity (anti - corruption) with independent oversight to ensure disciplinary measures are effective.
4. Define a single community border crossing platform with common ID (machine readable card) for regular border crossers and residents of border communities.
5. Harmonize ID (between African countries & worldwide): extend machine readable passports and e passports to align with harmonized ID card within Africa.
6. Develop a commercial strategy so that resource injection comes from commercial and private sector border users rather than public funding. Business cases should be developed to demonstrate cost benefit analysis of biometric ID systems, e border systems and commercial benefits to industry through the development of partnership between public and private sectors.
7. Invest in technology and tools to support officers to automate routine checks so they can focus on higher risk traffic. Develop the concept of the “border officer of future” in line with international best practice.

SUMMARY

This IOM / IBMATA expert workshop comprised of government and private sector border management experts from South Africa and beyond, united in their ambition to improve border management across the continent for the greater good. That is to facilitate the movement of genuine people and goods across international borders in order to promote economic growth, whilst simultaneously deterring and disrupting non-compliant trade and travel and those that would cause harm.

In that regard African countries needs to embrace best practices in border management by adopting a strategy which enables the to “push the border out” wherever possible, making best use of advanced passenger and trade data to risk assess traffic prior to arrival at the physical frontier (by making best use of new and emerging technology). Likewise, countries should embrace the concept of “integrated border management” so that the various agents involved in border crossing work in unison with each other (as in the case of the new Border Management Authority). Plus, the investment of biometric technology to overcome identity abuse will facilitate “end to end” identity systems and a greater capacity for automated border controls (such as e gates, kiosks, and drive through borders) without compromising on security. This, coupled with better surveillance and interdiction capabilities at land borders, should enable African countries to unleash the potential for smarter border management across the continent, for the benefit of all.

The workshop attendees recognised that government budgets were restricted in implementing many of these solutions in Africa. There was a clear need to develop business cases with the private sector to enable border users (transportation companies, traders, port authorities) to engage in options for investment in return for a better passage across borders in the future to stimulate growth.