

# RAPID SITUATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADERS

at the Beitbridge Port of Entry  
in South Africa during the  
COVID-19 Pandemic

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This publication was made possible through support provided by The Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM and FCDO.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration  
Walker Creek Office Park  
90 Florence Ribeiro Avenue  
Muckleneuk  
Pretoria  
0181  
South Africa  
Tel.: +27 12 342 2789  
Fax: +27 12 342 0932  
Email: [angandu@iom.int](mailto:angandu@iom.int)  
Website: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021. *Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment of Informal Cross-border Traders at the Beitbridge Port of Entry in South Africa during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. IOM, Pretoria.

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ISBN 978-92-9268-207-1 (PDF)

ISBN 978-92-9268-208-8 (print)

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

<b>BCP</b>	border control post
<b>CBTA</b>	cross-border traders association
<b>COMESA</b>	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
<b>DSBD</b>	Department of Small Business Development
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (United Kingdom)
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>ICBT</b>	informal cross-border trade
<b>IDI</b>	in-depth interview
<b>IHR</b>	International Health Regulations
<b>KII</b>	key informant interview
<b>PCR</b>	polymerase chain reaction
<b>REC</b>	regional economic community
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>STR</b>	Simplified Trade Regime
<b>SSCBT</b>	small-scale cross-border trade
<b>TIDO</b>	trade information desk officer
<b>UIF</b>	Unemployment Insurance Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# Executive summary

## Background

Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) is significant in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It accounted for 30–40 per cent of the total intra-SADC trade in 2012 and had an estimated value of USD 17.6 billion in 2004. Women make up approximately 70 per cent of informal traders but face gender-specific risks and are more susceptible to harassment and exploitation by corrupt officials. The fact that women make up the majority of the informal cross-border traders does not seem to contribute to their improved conditions in the sector.

With a marked increase in gender-based violence (GBV) and a decrease in access to sexual and reproductive health, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is expected to significantly affect women more than men especially by widening existing financial inequalities between men and women. The outbreak of COVID-19 in Southern Africa led to border closures and travel restrictions throughout the region. Where cross-border trade is permitted, it has been to allow the flow of essential and large commercial goods and not for the movement of people. The flows have also been accompanied by quarantine measures of varying periods, often at the cost of the traveller. Additional security measures have been put in place in some areas to patrol borders. For informal cross-border traders, these changes have had a catastrophic impact on their livelihoods because they are unable to conduct and carry on with trade as usual. The restrictions to help curb the spread of COVID-19 have had greater negative impacts on informal trade than on other sectors. Women have particularly been more severely affected by economic losses. The informal sector and especially women in the sector are likely to experience further challenges that will need attention post-COVID-19.

The aim of this assessment is to contribute towards the enhanced protection of the health and economic rights of informal cross-border traders by facilitating the continuation of trade during the COVID 19 pandemic. The assessment was conducted in Musina town and the Beitbridge port of entry, which connects South Africa to Zimbabwe, and included both border-specific and national-level analyses.

## Findings

**The Beitbridge port of entry is an eclectic gateway for South Africa to the rest of the African continent.** The Beitbridge port of entry is South Africa's busiest land border for human as well as commercial and non-commercial traffic. It is connected to the Beitbridge border post on the Zimbabwean side, linking South Africa with the rest of Africa. Besides conventional trade, substantial local and informal trade that comprises small volumes of everyday and retail goods officially



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

and unofficially pass through this border post. These activities have turned the town of Musina and the Beitbridge port of entry into an eclectic mix of indigenous South African nationals, short-term migrants who either engage in shopping and informal trade or seek employment, asylum seekers and refugees, and tourists. The mobilities in and at the Beitbridge port of entry make it the busiest entry/exit land port that links South Africa to the rest of Africa to the north. Besides migrant workers, the people in these movements have also included informal cross-border traders and other travellers from and to as far-flung parts of Africa as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. A significant proportion of people in these mobilities at the Beitbridge port of entry also include informal cross-border traders and cross-border shoppers from Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa. Not all the people who travel to and from South Africa through the border at the Beitbridge port of entry stay on in Musina town. Some informal traders proceed to Johannesburg to source goods for export to their countries of usual residence. ICBT, as well as cross-border shopping that involves Zimbabwean and traders from other African countries, and immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees from Asia and the Horn of Africa, seems to be gaining prominence in Musina and at the border and contributes to increased settlement in Musina town, to traffic that is transiting to other parts of South Africa and the rest of Africa, and to a rise in the number of consumers of goods and services in Musina.

**ICBT is part of the informal economy; a viable and significant component of (Southern) Africa's socioeconomic reality.** ICBT differs from other activities in the informal economy/sector in that it is defined by the distribution of goods and services across nation-State borders. ICBT is not to be conflated with activities that are conducted below the radar, in the underground economy or shadow economy, and are pursued in deliberate contravention of the law. The informal economy and associated activities such as ICBT in legitimate goods and services have grown and become permanent in (Southern) Africa. ICBT constitutes commercial exchanges carried out by individuals who operate in the informal economy/sector as unregistered small firms, sole traders or family businesses.

**Major African regional economic communities (RECs) recognize the value of ICBT and engage in concerted efforts to promote the sector.** The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC) recognize that ICBT is a real feature of life in African borderlands and that it helps create jobs and significantly contributes to income generation and helps sustain livelihoods. The two RECs have separately instituted the Simplified Trade Regime (STR), which includes measures to help informal cross-border traders fulfil customs procedures and requirements. The RECs, therefore, help to harness ICBT and exploit existing potential in the informal sector to improve people's welfare and generate positive macroeconomic and social outcomes.

**Informal cross-border traders trade in conventional goods produced in the formal sector and pay tax.** The most traded goods by informal cross-border traders range from new clothes and shoes to processed food to household goods and beddings, particularly blankets, bed covers, bed sheets and pillows. Most

informal cross-border traders also trade in groceries. Informal cross-border traders pay the required taxes on these goods at the border. The informal cross-border traders interviewed for the assessment confirmed that export/import permits were required for the kinds of goods in which they traded, although the documents or permits required for purposes of paying the taxes on the goods were not centrally issued by a single government agency at the BCP. Instead, the traders had to obtain the documents from relevant government departments away from the border. This affected the traders financially and in terms of time. It caused delays at the border, as the processes were fragmented, hence fuelling congestion and frustration among the informal cross-border traders.

**Despite high levels of illiteracy, informal cross-border traders were generally aware of COVID-19 and generally followed COVID-19 regulations and protocols.** Informal cross-border traders were generally aware of COVID-19, most of them claiming to have acquired formal knowledge in the measures for preventing and controlling the disease. Broadcast media, including television, radio and the Internet, was the major source of information/knowledge about COVID-19 prevention and control measures for the informal cross-border traders. In addition to broadcast media, local communities including churches, social media, and social clubs; friends; and family provided key sources of information/knowledge on COVID-19 and the required measures to avoid infection and help to prevent and control the spread of the disease. Government ranked least among the sources of information about COVID-19 for the informal cross-border traders. Most of the informal cross-border traders frequently used hand sanitizers and washed their hands with soap when or after touching items or surfaces that were frequently touched by other people such as door handles, tables, gas pumps and shopping carts. Most of them also used hand sanitizers when entering and leaving public places as well as when they felt the urge to touch their eyes, nose or mouth. As a group, female informal cross-border traders were, however, more likely than males to use hand sanitizers in such occasions as entering public places, touching surfaces that were frequently handled by people and when they felt the urge to touch their faces or when putting on their face masks.

**COVID-19 regulations and national lockdown had socioeconomic impacts on informal cross-border traders, but the impacts were more pronounced and severe on female informal cross-border traders.** The mandatory requirement to present valid certificates of negative COVID-19 test results to cross the borders restricted informal cross-border traders' movements and had repercussions for their businesses. The border closures led to disruption in their businesses, as they could not move and conduct any trade. All the sampled informal cross-border traders, both males and females, indicated that cross-border trade was their only source of employment, source of income and means of survival. Eleven of the 22 informal cross-border traders who were interviewed for the rapid assessment indicated that they engaged in ICBT because they were driven into the sector to survive. The COVID-19 pandemic regulations had differentiated socioeconomic impacts between men and women in South Africa. COVID-19 came at a time when

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Africa was already grappling with another enormous challenge which President Cyril Ramaphosa referred to as “another pandemic”. The economic and social impacts of the national lockdown were also more severe on women than on men. Women accounted for about two thirds of job losses in the initial months of the national lockdown (February–April 2020) than men, and even when the country started moving from lockdown Level 3 to the less restrictive lockdown Level 1 in October 2020, the substantial recovery in employment was greater for men than it was for women. Women were even less likely to receive unemployment grants than men despite the higher likelihood of being unemployed.

**Women informal cross-border traders constitute most informal cross-border traders and yet face gender-specific risks and are more susceptible to harassment and exploitation.** GBV cases in South Africa increased during the national lockdown, prompting the country to heed the international call to prioritize GBV in its national response to COVID-19 and reiterate the Government’s continued implementation of the Emergency Response Action Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide announced in 2019. Although women constitute most informal cross-border traders, their work and the conditions in which they work are precarious, they face gender-specific risks, and they are more susceptible to harassment and exploitation by fellow traders and border officials. Female informal cross-border traders indicated that harassment by officials was a problem they had experienced even before the outbreak of COVID-19.

**Women informal cross-border traders were more aware of and complied with COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures than male informal cross-border traders.** Women informal cross-border traders generally tended to be more aware of and complied with COVID-19 procedures, regulations and requirements at the border and the markets/malls than their male counterparts. Most of the women confirmed that they frequently used hand sanitizers, washed their hands with soap and water, had their temperature checked, observed social distancing, and underwent polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests and carried negative test certificates as proof of the tests.

**COVID-19 pandemic and measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus exacerbated the dire financial constraints faced by informal cross-border traders especially female traders.** The measures limited the traders’ ability to continue running their businesses and left the female traders with no alternative but to use their household savings to carry the double burden of singly heading and providing for their households.

## Recommendations

### Short term

#### 1. Information and awareness-raising

Provide information, such as on relief measures made available by the Government, to reduce the negative effects of national lockdown and the associated restrictions on actors in the informal economy/sector, especially cross-border traders.

#### 2. Waivers for informal cross-border traders to conduct business

Informal cross-border traders should be given special exemptions to conduct business when stringent COVID-19 regulations are enforced. This will help lessen the negative economic and financial impacts of the regulations on the traders.

#### 3. Subsidies for informal cross-border traders to cover PCR test fees

Subsidies should be extended to informal cross-border traders to cover fees for PCR testing. This will lessen the negative financial impacts on the traders as well as the chances of compelling some of the traders to opt for fake PCR certificates.

#### 4. Harmonization of COVID-19 certificate validity window

A harmonized time frame of the validity of COVID-19 certificates which informal cross-border traders should produce at the border as part of the travel requirements during the pandemic should be established for the SADC region. The 72-hour validity window stipulated in South African legislation differs from the 48 hours in Zimbabwe.

### Medium to long term

#### 1. Recognizing the informal economy/sector

In the long term, ICBT should be recognized as a permanent reality in the SADC region. It should also be distinguished from the underground economy and associated activities. This will provide opportunities for supporting the sector, as well as unleash its potential to contribute to livelihoods and foster regional integration.

#### 2. Introduction of the STR

Recognition of ICBT should be accompanied by measures to help informal cross-border traders fulfil customs procedures and requirements such as the STR, implemented by COMESA and the EAC separately.

### **3. Training, sensitization and rights awareness campaigns**

Deliver training and sensitization on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse to various stakeholders at the BCP to address GBV and the harassment of informal cross-border traders. The training should especially target border management officials and informal cross-border traders. Border management authorities should also be made aware of migrant protection issues and encouraged to take necessary steps to prevent abuses.

### **4. Gender mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming and advocating mechanisms to help prevent the harassment of women informal cross-border traders in particular should go in tandem with training and sensitization of border management officials and informal cross-border traders.

### **5. Financial inclusion of informal cross-border traders**

Establish mechanisms for financing ICBT that consider training needs in numeracy and financial management/accounting. This will enable the informal cross-border traders to transform their businesses into sustainable ventures.

### **6. Flow monitoring and population mobility mapping**

Determine the flow, dynamics, and mobility trends of informal cross-border traders at the BCP and other crossing points. This will provide detailed information on destinations and goods in which they trade as well as migrant intentions.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Project background

Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) is significant in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It accounted for 30–40 per cent of total intra-SADC trade in 2012 (Afrika and Ajumbo, 2012; Nshimbi and Moyo, 2017) and had an estimated value of USD 17.6 billion in 2004 (Musonda, 2004). Women make up approximately 70 per cent of informal traders but face gender-specific risks and are more susceptible to harassment and exploitation by corrupt officials (Sommer and Nshimbi, 2018; UNECA, 2017). The fact that they make up most informal cross-border traders does not seem to help conditions for them in that sector.

The majority of female informal cross-border traders are relatively poor and have low levels of education but trade in high volumes of low-value goods, including food products, cosmetics, cloth and handicrafts (UNECA, 2017). Women informal cross-border traders support some of the poorest communities and so any threat to ICBT poses a threat to the most vulnerable and least resilient. Moreover, besides a marked increase in gender-based violence (GBV) and a decrease in access to sexual and reproductive health, COVID-19 is expected to significantly affect women more than men especially by widening the existing financial inequality between men and women.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Southern Africa led to border closures and travel restrictions throughout the region. Where cross-border trade is permitted, it has been to allow the flow of essential and large commercial goods and not for the movement of people. The flows have also been accompanied by quarantine measures of varying periods, often at the cost of the traveller. Additional security measures have been put in place in some areas to patrol borders. For informal cross-border traders, these changes have had a catastrophic impact on their livelihoods as they are unable to conduct and carry on with trade as usual. The restrictions to help curb the spread of COVID-19 have had greater negative impacts on informal trade than on other sectors. Women have particularly been more severely affected by economic losses. The informal sector is likely to experience further challenges post-COVID-19.

## 1.2. Objectives of the assessment

This rapid assessment was conducted within the context of a broader emergency response project called Supporting Informal Cross-border Traders in Southern Africa to Do Business Safely during the COVID-19 Pandemic, which was funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom and implemented by IOM. The overall objective of the project is to

## 1. INTRODUCTION

contribute towards the enhanced protection of the health and economic rights of informal cross-border traders through the facilitation of continued trade during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project seeks the following outcomes:

- (a) Consensus exists on policy direction to favourably incorporate ICBT and informal traders into national COVID-19 trade plans and, to the extent possible, into COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery plans.
- (b) Border control posts (BCPs) and border officials have improved capacity to facilitate a healthier and safer environment for informal cross-border traders to operate.
- (c) Small-scale cross-border traders/Informal cross-border traders demonstrate increased ability on how to trade safely and operate at BCPs despite restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 1.3. Scope of the assessment

Within the context of the FCDO-funded project, IOM commissioned a rapid situation and needs assessment of ICBT in South Africa to contribute towards the enhanced protection of the health and economic rights of informal cross-border traders by facilitating continued trade during the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment would be conducted closely with other assessments in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe to inform activities under the three components of the project. The activities include national-level policy dialogue and dialogue with border officials and cross-border traders associations (CBTAs) at the BCP level.

The assessment in South Africa focused on the Beitbridge port of entry and the town of Musina, and it also included both border-specific and national-level analyses. In the assessment, the situation at the Beitbridge port of entry was analysed in close collaboration with the assessment that involved a corresponding analysis on the Zimbabwe side of the border. The intention of the assessment at the Beitbridge port of entry was also to create a gender-mainstreamed baseline. A detailed list of the specific issues covered in the assessment is outlined in Annex 1. To adequately address the issues, the assessment employed a range of methods including key informant interviews (KIIs), in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observations. These are described in the next section. The main purpose of the interviews was to collect information on the lived experiences of cross-border traders before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This also provided an opportunity to seek information on gender-specific risks, harassment and exploitation that female cross-border traders experience in the course of conducting their businesses (UNECA, 2017). The interviews also sought to identify how women dealt with gender-sensitive/health issues in the conduct of their businesses. Of particular interest was information on informal cross-border traders' livelihoods and how they coped in the face of restrictions on mobility and border closures. The assessment also probed various COVID-19 risk reduction measures available to cross-border traders and the traders' practices in response to COVID-19. The interviews critically sought to assess the extent to which informal cross-border traders demonstrated increased ability to

exercise safety when conducting their trade and how they operated at the BCPs when COVID-19 restrictions were enforced.

Finally, the assessment also sought to determine if ICBT occurred at the Beitbridge port of entry at the time of the study and to estimate the volume, nature, and scale of ICBT and the associated restrictions at the time of the assessment. This information is essential to determining the effect of the COVID-19 restrictions on ICBT and the priority needs of informal cross-border traders, assuming the restrictions were in place at the time of the assessment. The idea is to inform programming on what measures should be taken in support of the cross-border traders to conduct business during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the future.



## 2. Methodology, assumptions and limitations

### 2.1. Assessment methodology

The formative assessment employed a mixed-methods approach (i.e. qualitative and quantitative). As proposed in its terms of reference, the assessment included a rapid literature/desk review of current publications and reports on ICBT in South Africa and Southern Africa. The rapid situation and needs assessment were conducted at the Beitbridge port of entry, on the South African side, and in Musina town in December 2020.

#### 2.1.1. Literature/Desk review

The literature/desk review preceded primary data collection. The preliminary findings from the exercise informed the further development and refinement of the primary data collection tools. The review, therefore, formed part of the preparatory analysis conducted to initiate the detailed situational and needs assessment. This included a review of the following documents:

##### a. Published literature

- (i) National COVID-19 policies and strategies, and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines;
- (ii) National COVID-19 response plans, policies and strategies;
- (iii) Post-COVID-19 recovery plans, policies and strategies, and other publications;
- (iv) National-level and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines within the context of the COVID-19 national response;
- (v) International Health Regulations (IHR) (e.g. 2005 IHR) and national plans that support the implementation of the IHR;
- (vi) National Migration Profiles;
- (vii) National migration policy;
- (viii) SADC COVID-19 guidelines;
- (ix) Tripartite COMESA–EAC–SADC COVID-19 guidelines;
- (x) A United Nations Economic Commission for Africa report on facilitating cross-border trade through a coordinated Africa response to COVID-19;
- (xi) A World Trade Organization report on cross-border mobility, COVID-19 and global trade;

## 2. METHODOLOGY, ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- (xii) Guidance on COVID-19 issued by the World Health Organization (WHO);
- (xiii) Other recent publications.

### b. Project documents

- (i) Project proposals with the logical frameworks;
- (ii) Project activity plans and budgets.

This literature review is instrumental in providing a deeper understanding of the assignment, situation and needs assessment. It also entailed teasing out important issues that needed further investigation through analysis of the relevant primary data.

### 2.1.2. Primary data

The objective of the primary data collection was to interrogate further the preliminary findings of the literature review. Some KIs, IDIs, gender analysis, stakeholder analysis and guided observations were conducted.

#### a. Individual interviews:

A total of 22 informal cross-border traders from Musina town in South Africa were purposively selected using the snowballing method, and IDIs were conducted with them. Section 3 profiles and presents detailed information about the respondents including their age, gender and the economic activities in which they engaged with regard to trade as well as in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The list of respondents is presented in Annex 2 of this report. Ideally, 15 of the respondents should have been members of a CBTA affiliated with the regional association. However, the assessment has established that there is no CBTA in South Africa. Considerable effort was made to obtain a proportional sample for the IDIs that reflected the gender composition of as well as arguments in the literature that females generally make up about 70 per cent of actors in the informal trade sector (Sommer and Nshimbi, 2018). COVID-19-related conditions, coupled with the constraints of a rapid assessment exercise, made it difficult to realize this goal. Data collection involved computer-aided personal interviewing gadgets, which were used to capture and send interviews online. KoBo Collect, an online data collection software, was used to develop the online data collection questionnaire/forms.

#### b. COVID-19 compliance during IDIs:

Given the current COVID-19 epidemic, all 22 IDIs were conducted face to face with total observation of all the legislated and recommended COVID-19 preventative measures. The data enumerators used handheld personal devices loaded with KoBo Collect to record data during the interviews. They always wore masks and carried hand sanitizers with them and used them every time and when the need arose.

### c. KIIs:

Interviews with other stakeholders identified during the stakeholder mapping exercise at project inception could not materialize in December and the rest of the period the rapid assessment was conducted. This is because the officials that had been targeted for interviews had competing and urgent work schedules that were dictated by the commotion and activities associated with the period in which the study was conducted. The Beitbridge port of entry is always a hive of activities in December/January and congestion is a common sight given the volume of traffic and people making their way to and from holidays in South Africa and abroad. The photo below shows approximately 12 km convoy of traffic that stretched from Musina town to the Beitbridge port of entry during the rapid assessment.



Traffic stretching from Musina town to the Beitbridge port of entry control point. © IOM 2020

Table 5 in Annex 2 lists the other key informants in addition to informal cross-border traders that had initially been identified for the KIIs. However, interviews with the identified key informants, besides the informal traders, did not materialize as explained previously in this report. The KII questions, however, had been tailored for each target group and some of the responses would also have been captured through KoBo Collect via structured questions. Through the KIIs, the objective was to establish how border officials mainstreamed gender into their operations and policies. Most importantly, the interviews were meant to gather primary data that showed how informal cross-border trade had been incorporated (or not) into the existing COVID-19 response plans and strategic guidance at the national level. The study meant to establish, through interviews with the border officials, the border restrictions in place at the time of the assessment. Most importantly, the interviews were intended to find out whether the Beitbridge port of entry and border officials had improved capacity to facilitate a healthier and safer environment for informal cross-border traders to operate during this pandemic and in the future.

#### d. Stakeholder analysis:

Stakeholder analysis was conducted with informal cross-border traders. This was critical for stakeholder management and for the success of the project. It aimed to inform the project on how to get buy-in and support from stakeholders. It also constituted a critical element of the assessment. Stakeholder analysis involved the identification of the informal cross-border traders and mapping – grouped according to factors such as age, sex, country of residence and types of goods in which they traded – and determined how best the project may involve and communicate with them. The research used the power/interest grid for stakeholder prioritization, which assisted the researcher in analyzing the stakeholders' engagement with the help of a stakeholder engagement matrix in which the informal cross-border traders' engagement was categorized into the following:

- Unaware – unaware of the project and potential impacts;
- Resistant – aware of the project but resistant to any changes that may occur due to the outcomes of the project;
- Neutral – aware of the project but neither supportive nor unsupportive;
- Supportive – aware of the project and supportive of its outcomes;
- Leading – aware of the project and actively engaged in ensuring success.

#### e. Gender analysis:

A key project outcome is the effective integration of inclusive and gender-sensitive service delivery needs and priorities in ICBT. The project therefore proposes to use the Project Cycle Analysis tool of the Harvard Analytical Framework, which consists of a series of questions that examine the proposed project design from a gender perspective. This will meet the need to understand how the project was designed to mainstream gender through its activities. It consists of a series of questions that are designed to assist in the examination of project proposals, project documents and project reports from a gender perspective, using the gender-disaggregated data and capturing different effects of social change on women and men (March et al., 1999). This also includes an analysis of gender policy at the two border posts. The gender analysis makes use of the Project Analysis Framework and gender policies. This analysis therefore intends to provide:

- Gender awareness – understanding of gender relations and their implications for development policy and implementation;
- A review of women's priorities – restraining and driving forces;
- Recommendations to address women's practical needs and strategic interests.



The research will also estimate the number of cross-border traders (by sex) with the help of CBTA registers or those of other organizations in the location of the specific BCPs. This same assessment will also make use of the number of traders registered with the CBTAs or other trade-related associations on each side of the border at the time of the assessment.

**f. Observations – border post and market walkthroughs:**

Key observations were made at the Beitbridge port of entry and in Musina town. Two observation checklists were developed for use by the consultant to standardize the observations and use them for any comparisons. The research aimed to observe the border post's COVID-19 facilities and the border facilities that offer gender-sensitive and health services and information. The same was planned for markets where informal cross-border traders operate at the border and in Musina town. While the market walkthroughs were successfully conducted, the congestion at the border did not provide a conducive environment to conduct the border walkthrough. The checklists had semi-structured questions that were developed and loaded to KoBo Collect, an online data collection tool that also works offline.

## 2.2. Assessment assumptions

The assessment was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when countries in the SADC had instituted various measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. It was assumed that ICBT occurred at the specific BCP at the time of the assessment. In this case, the volume, nature and scale of ICBT at the time of the assessment would make for a meaningful study. However, due cognizance of border and travel restrictions in place at the time of the assessment was taken. The assessment assumed and sought to understand the effect of these restrictions on ICBT and the priority needs of informal cross-border traders, assuming that these restrictions are in place.

## 2.3. Limitations of the assessment

The assessment was conducted while the national state of disaster was still in effect and COVID-19 was still a pandemic. The COVID-19 alert level at the time of the assessment was Level 3 (see section 4 of this report). This meant that the project team could not deploy some of the methods that would have ensured gathering of relevant information for the assessment. Due to restrictions on public gatherings, for instance, the project could not hold any focus group discussion to gather information that would have been useful in triangulations. The exercise was also conducted during the festive period. This period is characterized by large volumes of human and commercial traffic at the border. Further to the difficulties encountered in accessing key informants, the information gathered during this period is most likely skewed as the border is not as active during other times of the year. The congestion at the border also made it impossible to conduct border walkthrough observations due to the risk of contracting the disease associated with large crowds.



## 3. Beitbridge port of entry

### 3.1. Description and location

The Beitbridge port of entry is South Africa's busiest land border for human as well as commercial and non-commercial traffic. It is connected to the Beitbridge border post on the Zimbabwean side and therefore links South Africa with the rest of Africa. The border post is approximately 12 km from Musina, the northernmost town of South Africa in Limpopo province.

The Beitbridge port of entry was established under the 1881 Pretoria Convention, which was later replaced by the 1884 London Convention. The latter set out the boundaries of the South African Republic. The Beitbridge port of entry is situated at the intersection of the South African N1 Highway and the Zimbabwean A6 Highway (Moyo and Nshimbi, 2019a). The two are joined by the Alfred Beit Road Bridge. Besides what is considered conventional trade, substantial local and informal trade that consists of small volumes of everyday and retail goods that range in value from about ZAR 500 to ZAR 15,000 (Pederby et al., 2016) officially and unofficially passes through this border post. This is confirmed by the interview responses recorded in this report.

### 3.2. Demographics and main economic activities at the border

The social/demographic composition of Musina town includes the Venda-speaking people, the Sotho (Northern), the Tsonga people, the Shona, Somalis, Afrikaners, Bangladeshis, the Chinese, the English and Indians. Thus, Musina town and the Beitbridge port of entry constitute an eclectic mix of indigenous South African nationals, short-term migrants who either engage in shopping and informal trade or seek employment, asylum seekers and refugees, and tourists.

The town of Musina was founded in 1904 and economically established on copper mining. Copper was later replaced by diamond as a major driver of economic activity in the town/area after the closure of the copper mine and the opening of a diamond mine in 1993. Besides diamond mining, Musina is known for game farming, tourism and cross-border trade. The provincial government of Limpopo has declared Musina a growth point with the establishment of a special economic zone that is expected to create about 19,000 jobs. This, and the general development seen in Musina in recent decades (Pophiwa, 2017), is also likely to contribute to increased cross-border trade and inflows of migrants.

### 3.3. Trade and migration at the border

#### 3.3.1. Informal cross-border trade at the border

The informal economy or informal sector (Hart, 2016) makes up the environment in which ICBT occurs (Nshimbi and Moyo, 2017; Nshimbi et al., 2020). It includes legally unprotected and unregulated employment and enterprises as well as all forms of informal employment in small unregistered or informal enterprises (Nshimbi, 2018). The informal economy/sector is segmented into informal enterprises and informal jobs. ICBT differs from other activities in the informal economy/sector in that it is defined by the distribution of goods and services across nation-State borders. Various kinds of ICBT and informal cross-border traders exist. Some of them include illegal activities and the trade in illicit goods, contraband and small arms, and light weapons. This assessment does not conflate those activities with ICBT because they are conducted below the radar, in the underground economy or shadow economy, and are pursued in deliberate contravention of the law (Nshimbi, 2020a). The assessment takes cognizance of the growth and permanence of the informal economy and associated activities in Africa (Chen, 2013) and focuses on ICBT, wherein individuals handle and trade in legitimate goods and services. It focuses on ICBT, which constitutes commercial exchanges carried out by individuals who operate in the informal economy/sector as unregistered small firms, sole traders or family businesses.

Small-scale cross-border trade (SSCBT) is associated with ICBT. SSCBT consists of trade which is not recorded in official statistics and is conducted by small businesses in the contiguous borderlands of neighbouring countries or across their borders. The reasons why SSCBT is not recorded in official statistics vary, but SSCBT is generally characterized as involving activities where the traders bypass border posts, conceal and/or underdeclare and/or under-invoice their goods, and classify them wrongly (Lesser and Moisé-Leeman, 2009). On this account, the traders who engage in SSCBT tend to be criminalized and are said to evade tax and avoid administrative procedures (Lesser and Moisé-Leeman, 2009; UNECA, 2017).

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC), however, seem to recognize that ICBT is a real feature of life in African borderlands and that it helps create jobs and significantly contributes to income generation and helps sustain livelihoods (Nshimbi, 2020b). The two regional economic communities (RECs) have separately instituted the Simplified Trade Regime (STR), which includes measures to help informal cross-border traders fulfil customs procedures and requirements (Nshimbi, 2020a; UNECA, 2017). In this way, the RECs help harness ICBT to exploit existing potential in the sector to not only improve people's welfare at the micro level but also generate positive macroeconomic and social outcomes. The sector may be irregular, but it is not necessarily illegal. It also has great potential to contribute to regional integration from the bottom up (Moyo and Nshimbi, 2019b).

### 3.3.2. Migration through the border

The Beitbridge port of entry and Musina town have a long history of mobility that dates back to precolonial times. Over the years, the mobilities have largely involved labour migration to South Africa's mining, agriculture and hospitality industries. The mobilities have included small, large-scale and commercial trades since the Beitbridge port of entry is the busiest entry/exit land port that links South Africa to the rest of Africa to the north. Besides migrant workers, the people in these movements have also included informal cross-border traders and other travellers from and to as far-flung parts of Africa as Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania (Nshimbi, 2020b). It is worth emphasizing that a significant proportion of people in these mobilities at the Beitbridge port of entry also include informal cross-border traders and cross-border shoppers from Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa. Further, not all people who travel to and from South Africa through the border stay on in Musina town. Some informal traders proceed to Johannesburg to source goods for export to their countries of usual residence (Nshimbi and Moyo, 2018). Other people proceed to other provinces and cities in South Africa for various reasons.

The rapid socioeconomic changes in the first two decades of the twenty-first century contributed to new mobilities at the Beitbridge port of entry. This can be attributed to reduction in mining-driven labour migration and increases in trade-related activities. ICBT as well as cross-border shopping that involves Zimbabwean and traders from other African countries and immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees from Asia and the Horn of Africa seems to be gaining prominence in Musina and at the border (Pophiwa, 2017). This contributes to increased settlement in Musina town, to traffic that is transiting to other parts of South Africa and the rest of Africa, and to a rise in the number of consumers of goods and services in Musina.

## 3.4. Cross-border traders associations and other informal cross-border trade support agencies/organizations at the border

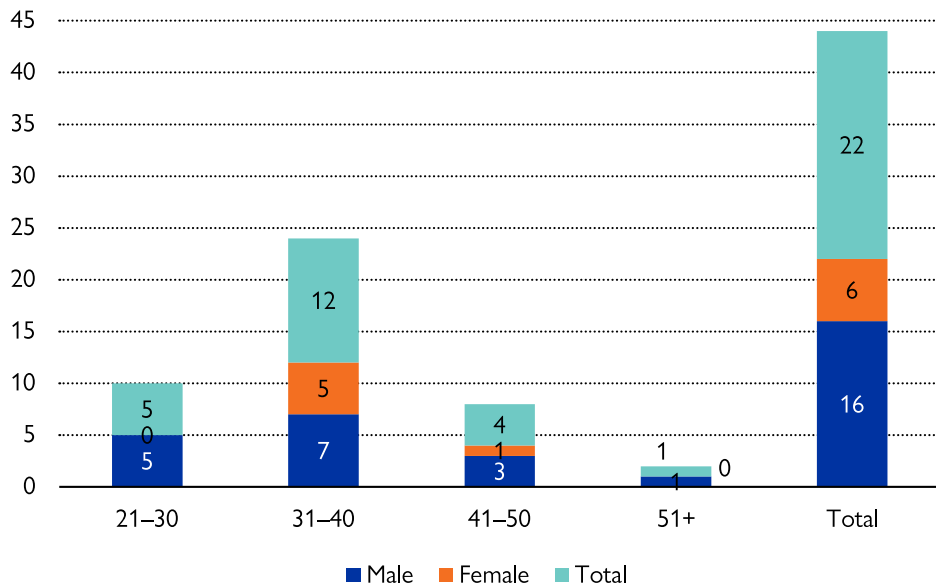
Observations and responses obtained from the 22 informal cross-border traders that formed the sample for the rapid assessment indicated that no registered CBTA like those found in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe existed in South Africa at the time the assessment was conducted. Hence, with the only exception of three, all the informal cross-border traders said they were not members of any traders associations in South Africa. Two of the three Zimbabweans who indicated membership in traders associations said they were part of the Beitbridge Cross-border Association and the Zimbabwe Cross-border Traders Association, respectively. None of the five South African traders indicated membership of any traders association. This made sense, as no CBTA existed in South Africa during the rapid assessment.

3. BEITBRIDGE PORT OF ENTRY

**3.4.1. Profile of small-scale cross-border traders and informal cross-border traders using the border**

Figures 1–3 and Tables 1–3 present information about some of the trading activities of the informal cross-border traders at the Beitbridge port of entry who were interviewed in Musina town. The respondents included 16 males and 6 females. Figure 1 shows that many of them, regardless if they were categorized into males and females, were between 31 and 40 years old. The sample did not include any female respondents in the 21–30 age range and 51 years old and above, while it included only 1 male above 51 years old. Most of the female traders were in the 31–40 age group like their male counterparts.

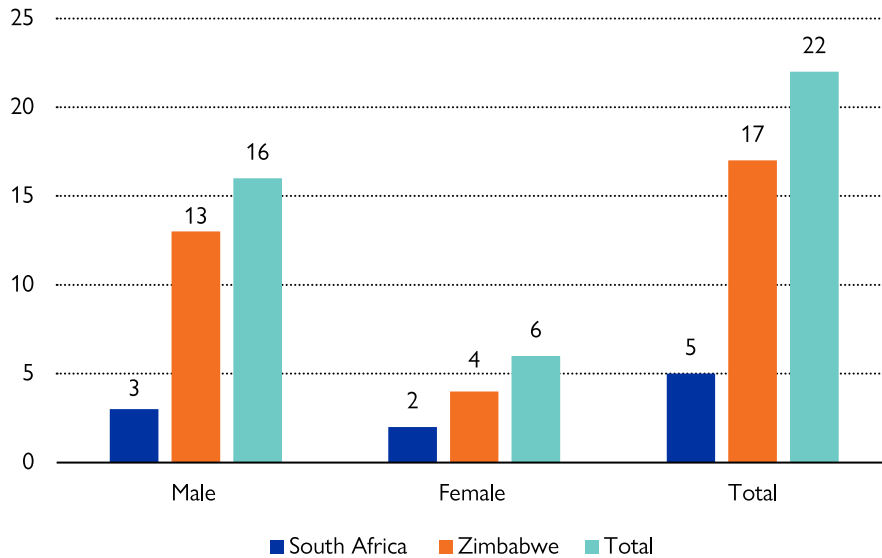
Figure 1. Age and sex of respondents



Source: Field data.  
 Note: n=22.

All of the respondents indicated that the Beitbridge port of entry was the border post they most frequently used when engaging in cross-border trade. None of them indicated using any other border for this purpose. An overwhelming majority of the traders said they were Zimbabweans, who lived in Zimbabwe and largely exported goods to that country (Figure 2). Even among the 5 South Africans who lived in South Africa, 4 said they exported goods to Zimbabwe and only 1 stated that her trade included both the import and export of goods between the two countries. This trader was 1 of 2 females, while the other 3 South African respondents were males (Figure 2). Several other respondents disclosed that they imported goods into South Africa, in addition to exporting to Zimbabwe. All of the 17 Zimbabweans, who included 13 males and 4 females, said they exported goods to Zimbabwe from Musina.

Figure 2. Respondents' countries of usual residence by sex



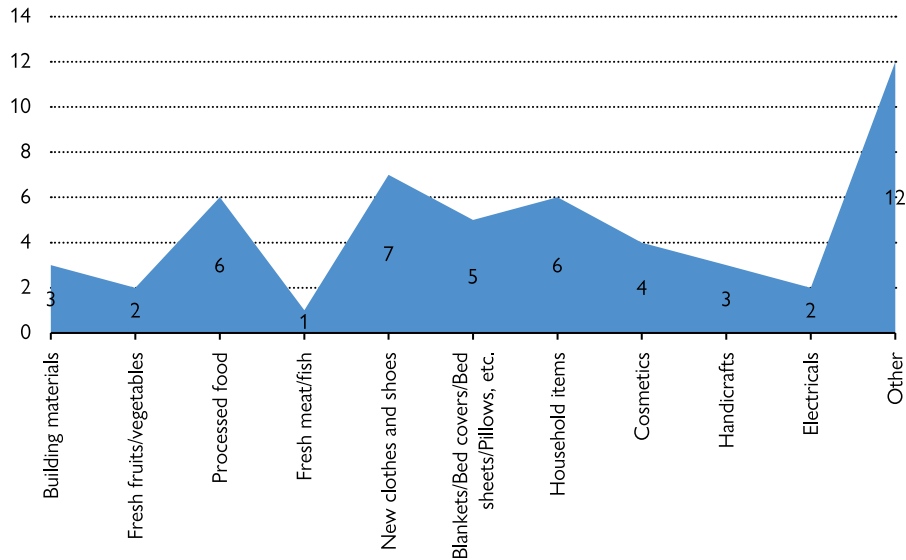
Source: Field data.

Note: n=22.

The informal cross-border traders traded in a variety of goods. Figure 3 shows the range of goods they frequently exported to Zimbabwe before the COVID-19 pandemic. Five of the respondents, among them a female, did not answer the question about the kind of goods that they traded in during the pandemic. Among the rest of the females who responded to the question, 3 said they traded in new clothes and shoes and beddings. Other products that all of the female respondents traded in included household goods, cosmetics, handcrafts and electricals. In general, the most traded goods, as shown in Figure 3, included new clothes and shoes, processed food, household items, and beddings, particularly blankets, bed covers, bed sheets and pillows. Most of the respondents also included groceries on the list of goods that they frequently traded in.

## 3. BEITBRIDGE PORT OF ENTRY

Figure 3. Frequently exported goods before the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: Field data.

Notes: 1. n=22.

2. This is a multiple-response question.

The 22 respondents were also asked to list the goods they traded in during the lockdown, after the Government adjusted the COVID-19 restriction to Level 3 (see section 4.5). The responses to this question show that the informal cross-border traders did change but continued trading in the same goods before COVID-19 and during the lockdown.

Most respondents said that they paid taxes at the border for the goods in which they traded. While most of the respondents admitted that export/import permits were required for the kinds of goods in which they traded, most of them said that the requisite documents/permits for purposes of paying the taxes were not centrally issued by a single government agency at the BCP. This means that the traders had to obtain the documents from relevant government departments in Harare. As a result, the traders were forced to spend money and time to travel to Harare to obtain these documents. The literature on ICBT suggests that informal cross-border traders may avoid customs procedures for this very reason (EASSI, 2012; Kubo, 2016; Njiwa, 2013; Peberdy, 2000) to save time and cut costs. But the situation at the Beitbridge port of entry also clearly points to the need for initiatives such as the STR, which is applied in COMESA and the EAC.

Table 1. Export/Import permit required for frequently traded goods

Permit required for goods	Centrally issued at the border		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	9	8	17
No		5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>



Moreover, the respondents who said the authorities required them to fulfil export or import permits at the BCP were split equally between those who said the permits were centrally issued by a single government department at the border and those who said otherwise (Table 1). Additionally, among the informal cross-border traders who admitted to paying for export/import permits, most complained that the required fees were high. Many of the respondents confirmed that they submitted the permits in person as hard copies.

All the respondents noted that they owned mobile phones and they indicated that the devices were useful in facilitating their businesses. Several respondents, for example, mentioned that they placed their orders for goods via WhatsApp prior to travelling to Musina to collect the goods (Table 2). More traders, however, indicated that they placed their orders in person. Table 2 also shows that most of the traders used cash to pay for goods, while fewer made use of point-of-sale payments via credit or debit cards. This was the same about bank/ATM deposits. Despite this, 11 of the 22 respondents indicated that they owned bank accounts (Table 3).

**Table 2. Commonly used methods to order and pay for goods from/in the country of import**

Method of placing order	Method of payment			Total
	Cash	ATM/Bank deposit	Credit card	
Phone call	1			1
WhatsApp messaging	7	2		9
In person	10		2	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>

Several respondents also indicated that they owned mobile accounts (Table 3), even though they did not use the accounts for business transactions. Ten of the 22 respondents neither had bank nor mobile accounts, as Table 3 indicates.

**Table 3. Ownership of bank account and mobile account**

Own a mobile account	Own a bank account		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	8	1	9
No	3	10	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>

### 3. BEITBRIDGE PORT OF ENTRY

#### **3.4.2. Services provided by cross-border traders associations and trade information desk officers to small-scale cross border traders and informal cross-border traders**

The non-existence of a registered CBTA in South Africa at the time of the rapid assessment explains the difficulty experienced by the researcher in estimating the number of cross-border traders by sex. No CBTA registers existed at the Beitbridge port of entry from which to draw a sample. Notwithstanding, it remains intriguing why many of the sampled respondents were not affiliated with any CBTA as most of them were from Zimbabwe, where registered associations exist. The assessment further determined the non-existence of trade information desk officers (TIDOs) to assist informal cross-border traders. It is worth mentioning that TIDOs are originally a COMESA initiative established to assist informal cross-border traders fulfil customs procedures and enhance their participation in the COMESA free trade area (FTA) through the regional organization's STR initiative (Nshimbi, 2017 and 2019). The absence of TIDOs at the Beitbridge port of entry is explained by the absence of a CBTA, the lack of official support for and perhaps recognition of ICBT in South Africa, and the non-existence of the STR in the SADC.

## 4. COVID-19: Challenges, impact and possible solutions

### 4.1. COVID-19: National, regional and global trends

The novel coronavirus disease outbreak was first reported to WHO by the authorities in Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019 (WHO, 2020a). In January 2020, the Chinese authorities identified the cause of the disease to be a novel coronavirus and temporarily named it 2019-nCoV. By February 2020, 26 countries in the world had reported confirmed cases, while China (including Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China; Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China; and Macao Special Administrative Region, China) alone had about 31,211 reported cases with 673 deaths (WHO, 2020c). The disease thus subsequently rapidly spread to Europe, North America and the rest of the world. In January 2020, it officially became a public health emergency of concern and was declared a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020b).

Coronaviruses belong to a large family of virus that cause illnesses, which range from the common cold to severe respiratory diseases. The 2019-nCoV first reported in Wuhan represented a new strain of the disease from a family of viruses previously undetected in humans. Renamed SARS-CoV-2 by WHO, COVID-19 causes severe acute respiratory conditions in humans (WHO, 2020a).

South Africa recorded the first COVID-19 case on 5 March 2020. This led President Cyril Ramaphosa to declare a state of national disaster and associated national lockdown on 26 March 2020. South Africa was not a lone enforcer of strict measures to contain the spread of the disease. Many countries around the world did too, leaving over half of the world's population under lockdown by 3 April 2020 (Mayaki, 2020). Many countries in Africa suspended international travels, developed quarantine programmes for national visitors and closed their national borders to stem the spread of the disease. This, as this report shows, impacted ICBT and the people who engage in that form of trade.

### 4.2. COVID-19 at the border

Table 4 presents the official statistics of COVID-19 cases in Musina for the month of December in 2020, where data is available. This is the same month in which data for the rapid assessment was collected. The data in Table 4 shows that Musina then had comparatively low active cases of the disease for a border town. The only exception was at the height of the travel period related to the December festive holidays, due to congestion caused by high levels of human and commercial traffic (for example, the traffic jam from the town of Musina to the Beitbridge port of entry). The border town then went on to report more cases of the disease within a week (eNCA,

## 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

2021). Table 4 shows a general increasing trend leading to that period, which could be associated with the rise in the number of travellers through the border and town starting from around 10 December. Accordingly, the number of cumulative cases rose from 238 in early December to about 270 towards the month's end.

**Table 4. Number of COVID-19 cases in Musina, December 2020**

Day	Number of cases			
	Cumulative	Active	Recoveries	Deaths
5 December 2020	238	3	233	2
6 December 2020	238	3	233	2
7 December 2020	240	5	233	2
9 December 2020	241	6	233	2
10 December 2020	245	10	233	2
12 December 2020	251	15	234	2
13 December 2020	253	17	234	2
14 December 2020	257	20	235	2
16 December 2020	258	19	237	2
17 December 2020	264	20	242	2
18 December 2020	264	15	247	2
21 December 2020	270	15	252	3

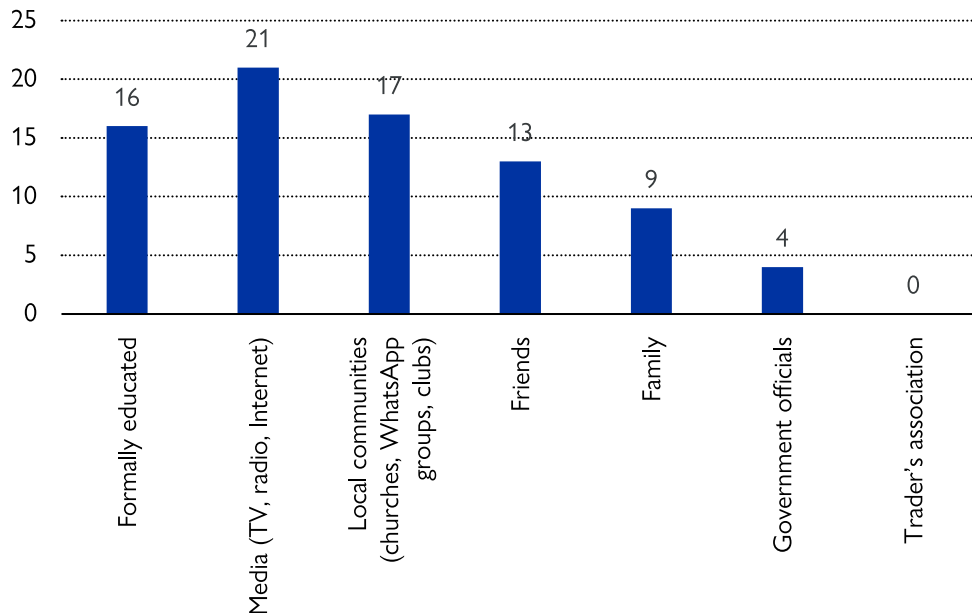
Source: Compiled by the author from Limpopo Provincial Government, Department of Health.

### 4.3. Incidence of COVID-19 and its management at the border

#### 4.3.1. COVID-19 awareness among informal cross-border traders

Figure 4 presents the sources of informal cross-border traders' knowledge and/or information about COVID-19 and the measures to prevent or control the disease. It is, firstly, clear from the figure that the informal cross-border traders were generally aware of COVID-19. Secondly, the figure shows that about 80 per cent of them claimed that they had formal knowledge or had been formally educated about COVID-19 prevention and control measures. Two of the 6 respondents who said they had not received any formal knowledge/information about COVID-19 were female. Figure 4 further shows that the media, including television, radio and the Internet, was the informal cross-border traders' major source of information or knowledge about COVID-19 prevention and control measures. All of the female respondents in the sample disclosed that they got information on COVID-19 from the media. It is, however, noteworthy that 1 of the 6 female respondents indicated that her only source of information or knowledge about COVID-19 was the media.

**Figure 4. Informal cross-border traders' sources of information/knowledge about COVID-19**



Source: Field data.

Notes: 1. n=22.

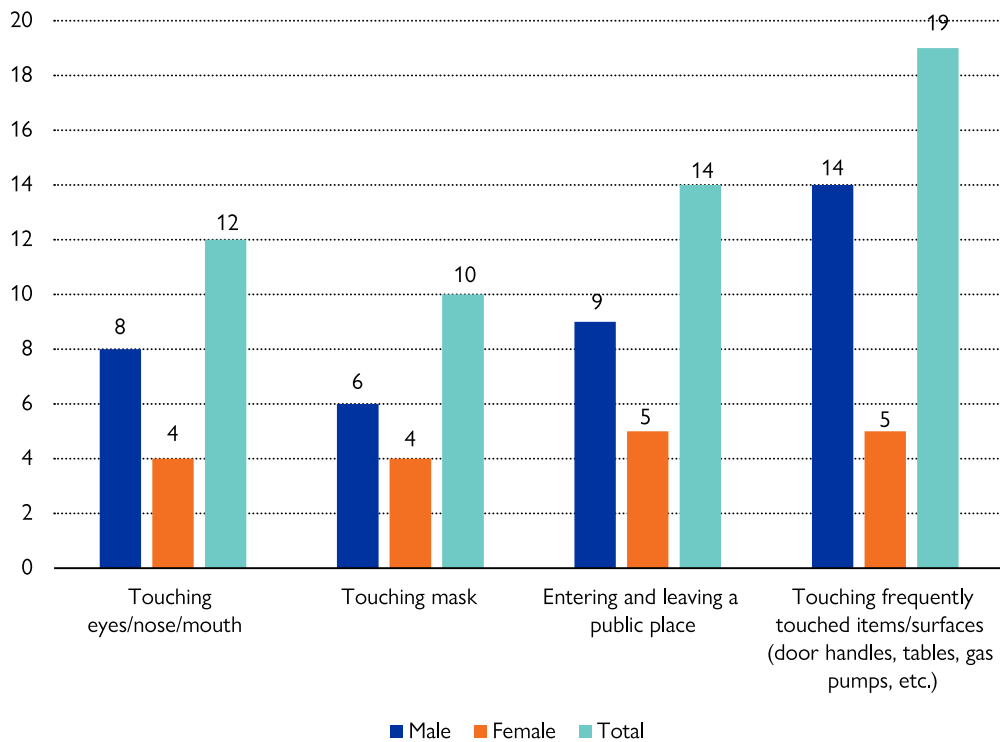
2. This is a multiple-response question.

Besides the media, the informal cross-border traders cited local communities including churches, social media and social clubs; friends; and family as the sources of information/knowledge about COVID-19 and the prescribed measures to avoid infection and help prevent and control the spread. Figure 4 also shows that only 4 of the 22 informal cross-border traders said that they got information about COVID-19 and prevention measures from the Government. All of the 4 respondents were male. No female in the sample got any information about the disease from government sources. The low number of respondents who indicated that they got information about COVID-19 from government reveals that government was the informal cross-border traders' least "go-to" place or provider of information about the disease. This could be explained by the fact that most of the respondents were Zimbabweans and might, therefore, have obtained the information from their own Government. However, none of the 5 South Africans in the sample cited government as a source of information either. It is also worthy to note that none of the traders mentioned having obtained any information about COVID-19 from CBTAs. Overall, the results shown in Figure 4 suggest that there is no significant difference in knowledge about COVID-19 between male and female respondents, as all respondents, regardless of sex, generally seem to have been exposed to more or less the same sources of information.

## 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Most of the traders who were interviewed also seemed quite aware of the necessary measures required to ensure safety when crossing the border or during the conduct of business in Musina. The occasions in which traders cleaned their hands with sanitizers are presented in Figure 5. All of the respondents said they knew when to use hand sanitizers.

**Figure 5. Occasions in which informal cross-border traders use hand sanitizers**



Source: Field data.

Most of the informal cross-border traders interviewed in the study indicated that they used hand sanitizers when or after touching items or surfaces that were frequently touched by other people. Such surfaces included door handles, tables, gas pumps and shopping carts. As shown in Figure 5, all except 2 of the respondents used hand sanitizers after handling frequently touched surfaces. One of the 2 who did not indicate doing so was female, and the other one was male. Fourteen of the 22 respondents also indicated that they used sanitizers when entering and leaving public places, while 12 of the 22 said they did so when they had the urge to touch their eyes, nose or mouth. Five in 6 females sampled for the study were among the 14 respondents who indicated using sanitizers when entering and leaving public places, while 4 of the females were among the 12 respondents who used sanitizers when they felt the urge to touch their faces. Figure 5 further shows that 10 of the 22 respondents also indicated that they sanitized their hands whenever they needed to use their face masks. Four of the 10 respondents who indicated using sanitizers prior to handling their face masks were female and the other 6 were male. Overall,

the data in Figure 5 suggests that as a group, females were more likely to use hand sanitizers on such occasions as entering public places, touching surfaces that were frequently handled by people, whenever they felt like touching their faces or when they needed to handle face masks.

Two points can be made here. Firstly, the responses in Figure 5 are generally consistent with some of the advice provided by various stakeholders that seek to curb the spread of COVID-19. During market walkthroughs in Musina, the data collectors also observed that some of this information was displayed as notices and reminders in markets, malls and stalls where informal cross-border traders bought their merchandise (as shown in the photo below). The signage reminds informal cross-border traders and shoppers to use hand sanitizer for instance or notifies them that they would not be allowed entry (to the store) if they did not wear any masks. Secondly, the difference in the use of sanitizers between male and female respondents is evident in the higher likelihood for females to use them. This is consistent with research, which suggests that women tend to abide by infection prevention and control measures more than men (American Society for Microbiology, 2005; Monk-Turner et al., 2005).

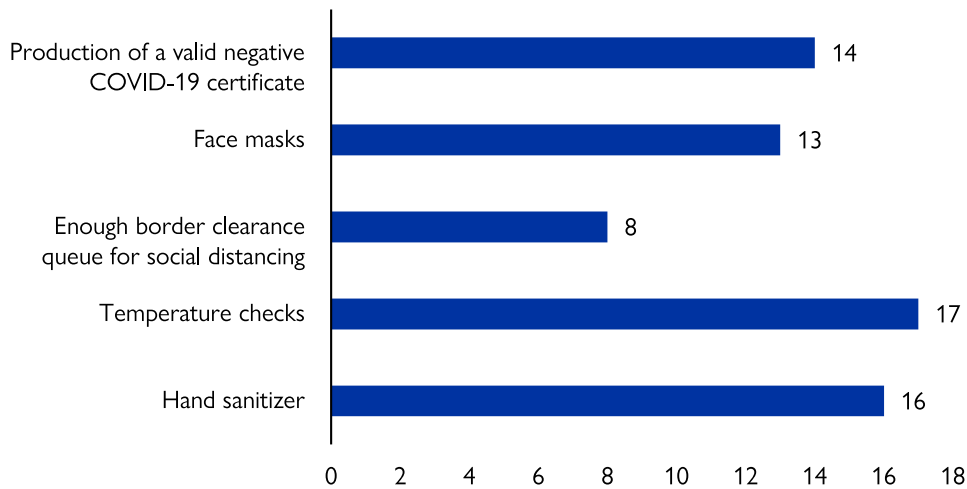


Notices and reminders to curb COVID-19 transmission are posted at the entrances of shops in Musina for traders and customers alike. © IOM 2020/Christopher C. NSHIMBI

### 4.3.2. COVID-19 prevention, control and management measures at the border

Figure 6 presents responses to a question about COVID-19 prevention and control measures that informal cross-border traders frequently followed at the border.

**Figure 6. Informal cross-border traders' compliance with COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures at the border**



Source: Field data.

Notes: 1. n=22.

2. This is a multiple-response question.

Most of the respondents confirmed that their temperature was checked at the border. This included all the 6 females in the sample and 11 of the 16 males who were interviewed. The respondents also indicated that they used the hand sanitizers that were provided at the entrance to the BCP. Of the 16 who confirmed using the sanitizers, 5 were female and 11 were male. That is, only 1 in 6 females sampled in the assessment did not indicate whether she had used the sanitizers that were provided at the BCP. Five males in the sample did not indicate using the sanitizers. The apparent higher level of compliance of the female respondents with the requirement to use the hand sanitizers provided at the BCP is consistent with and confirms the point made about Figure 5 that females tend to comply with infection prevention and control measures more than males.

Fourteen of the 22 respondents also indicated that they were required to produce valid COVID-19 certificates at the BCP. The certificates were purposed to show that the traders had tested negative for COVID-19. Only 1 of all the 6 females interviewed did not confirm presenting the certificate to fulfil this requirement, compared to 7 males who did not.

The respondents also mentioned they were required to wear face masks at the BCP. Fewer respondents, however, indicated having observed social distancing or that it was observed at the BCP. Of the 8 who indicated that social distancing

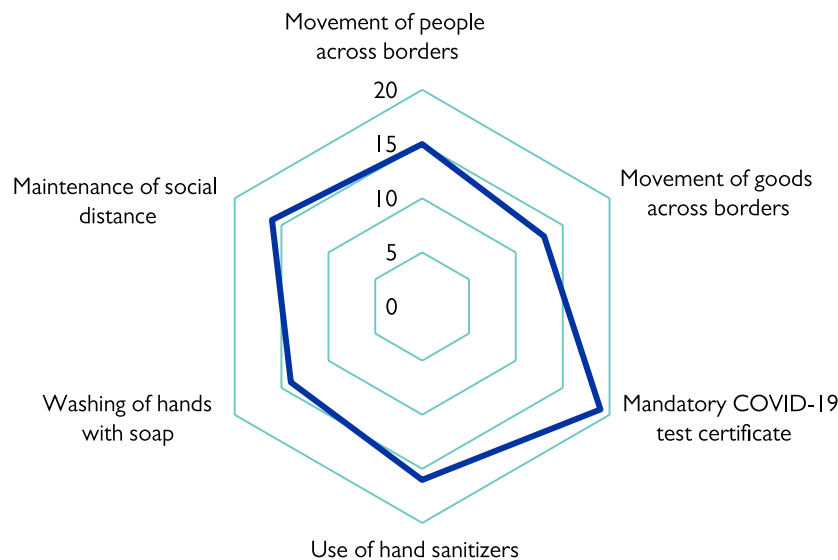


was observed, 2 were female and 6 were male. The responses in Figure 6 suggest a couple of issues. On the one hand, they show that the informal cross-border traders generally followed the requirements/regulations to observe the COVID-19 transmission prevention measures in public places which were prescribed by the health authorities. However, female traders seem to have been more compliant than male traders. On the other hand, the responses point to a level of consistency on the requirements/regulations that should be observed in public institutions and outlined by the Government's health authorities. They suggest that the authorities at the BCP instituted the cited measures and expected their clients to observe them.

#### 4.4. Impact of COVID-19 on informal trade at the border

The border and travel restrictions enforced due to the declaration of the state of national disaster had various impacts on cross-border trade and the traders. During the interviews, the informal cross-border traders confirmed that they were aware of the restrictions that the Government had instituted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 7 displays some of the restrictions cited by the informal cross-border traders.

**Figure 7. Border and travel restrictions instituted due to the COVID-19 pandemic**



Source: Field data.

Notes: 1. n=22.

2. This is a multiple-response question.

Most of the informal cross-border traders indicated that the mandatory requirement to produce valid certificates of negative COVID-19 test results to cross the border translated into a restriction on their cross-border movements. It is, however, worth noting that all travellers to South Africa are required to produce negative results of the COVID-19 or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. This is a government gazetted requirement in accordance with the Disaster Management Act

## 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

(South Africa, Department of Health, 2020; South Africa, DIRCO, 2020). The requirement applies to all travellers to South Africa and is not designed to restrict informal traders' trade activities per se. The results of the test should not be longer than 72 hours from the time the traveller departs from the country of origin. The South African authorities also require that the test be conducted by a certified medical practitioner and that the certificate bear the name and signature of the practitioner who conducted the test. The test costs about ZWD 60 in Zimbabwe and at least ZAR 850 in South African laboratories and pharmacies, and is also available at the Beitbridge port of entry on the South African side, administered by the National Health Laboratory Services at a fee of ZAR 170 (Daniel, 2020 and 2021; Felix, 2021; *South Africa: The Good News*, 2020). Many of the informal cross-border traders said the test was a hindrance to their mobility because of the cost and the fact that they had to take it frequently. In fact, unlike in South Africa, the results of the test for those entering Zimbabwe should not be longer than 48 hours (Zimbabwe, Parliament of, 2020). Hence, some traders categorically indicated the financial implications of the requirement, citing the test as not only expensive but also contributing to an increase to business expenses. This was compounded by the fact that the certificate expired within three days and a new one had to be obtained. All of the 6 female respondents in the sample were among the 19 of the 22 informal cross-border traders who said the requirement to take the test and produce results restricted their trade activities, while 3 of the 17 males did not see it as such. The informal cross-border traders equally found the requirement to maintain social distancing and the need to use hand sanitizers quite restrictive.

**Box 1. Voices of informal cross-border traders on effects of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on their businesses**

1. Business was not flowing as it ought to.
2. There was no order from my clients for a long time.
3. The COVID-19 clearance is expensive, ZAR 850, and must expire in three days. So, it means you spend more.
4. It has increased the cost of moving goods, whereas clients do not want me to add the price.
5. Cost of trading has increased.
6. It has not made it easy for me to pay [rent] for my business space.
7. It has made business to be almost not existing.
8. COVID-19 almost [killed] my business.
9. The COVID-19 [certificates] are expensive; hence, people just bribe and buy the certificates without testing. Doctors want money. Everyone must be tested at the borders for free.
10. More delays and uncertainty.
11. They affected us economic wise since we could not trade. We also expected to pay rentals for our shops, yet we were not trading.
12. Suffered economically as we ended up paying immigration and customs officials for us to be able to smuggle goods that were not allowed as well as crossing the border illegally.
13. Due to these restrictions, we have incurred a lot of bills including rentals and could not afford to provide for our families. Our children could not go to school and even now we cannot even pay for their fees as we are still trying to clear our credits.
14. Cross-border is [a] source of livelihood so border closures and import banning on other goods had a negative impact on us – we could not provide for our children and payment of bills etc. Considering that we travel a lot, COVID-19 tests are so costly because it's only valid for a few days.

RAPID SITUATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADERS  
AT THE BEITBRIDGE PORT OF ENTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

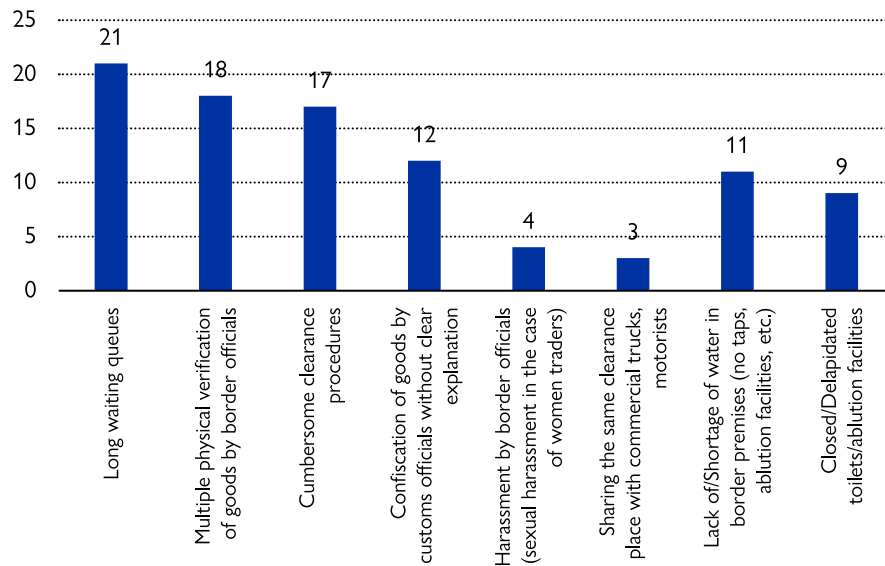
15. COVID-19 tests very expensive for us because we travel [a] lot. We applied to ZIMRA [Zimbabwe Revenue Authority] requesting to order our goods and cross without goods and we suffered financially because that was never approved.
16. We stay in Beitbridge and COVID-19 certificates are done in Harare and Bulawayo, we cannot travel to go to those cities to get tested. Also, it is very expensive. Our business was affected by travel bans that were implemented.
17. Our business ran losses and we struggled financially. COVID-19 tests are way expensive.
18. As a cross-border transporter, we earn a living from trading. We suffered a lot financially as we could not sustain our families. We tried to cross illegally, and we risked our lives. COVID-19 certificates are very expensive and not affordable so we end up buying these.
19. We are suffering now. We lost a lot of money during the boarder closure and we do not have enough capital anymore. We are now living from hand to mouth. COVID-19 certificates are too expensive, we [are] not making much profit and paying so much for a COVID-19 certificate is not fair.
20. The border closures brought so much pain to us including financial strain. Our working schedule changed, and we could not sustain ourselves.
21. During COVID-19 we were buying our supplies from other people who were smuggling the goods into Zimbabwe, though the prices were a bit high. It is not easy to access the COVID-19 certificate since we need to travel to big cities for testing. We cannot get these certificates at Beitbridge. Also, the certificates are very expensive, and we cannot afford.

On the effect of the imposition of the border and travel restrictions, a female respondent stated that this had direct negative impacts on her business. The rest of the traders gave a range of explanations in responses to this question and some of those explanations are transcribed verbatim in Box 1. From the responses in the box, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and border closures had negative financial impacts on the informal cross-border traders and their business. The traders generally expressed that the closures led to disruption in their businesses as movement was restricted, and they could not conduct any trade. Several traders also voiced their frustrations towards the financial implications of PCR tests. A female informal cross-border trader's complaint was especially noteworthy. She voiced her inability to provide for her children. Two more female respondents complained that they were still obliged to pay rentals and no longer had enough capital for their businesses.

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak and the border closures and restrictions on movement that followed, informal cross-border traders experienced various challenges due to the nature of business and the sector in which they operate. Figure 8 shows the challenges that the respondents in the assessment said they faced before the outbreak of COVID-19.

## 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Figure 8. Challenges experienced at the border before the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: Field data.

Notes: 1. n=22.

2. This is a multiple-response question.

With the only exception of 1 male respondent, all the informal cross-border traders (including 16 males and all the 6 female respondents) disclosed that the most common and frequent challenge they experienced when conducting business before the outbreak of COVID-19 were the long queues at the BCP and the prolonged waiting times they had to endure for them to be cleared. Another challenge that 13 of the 17 male respondents and 5 of the 6 female respondents said they most frequently encountered before the COVID-19 outbreak was the tendency by border officials to physically inspect their goods multiple times. Moreover, their goods were often confiscated by customs officials for reasons that were not clear or explained. Four of the 6 female and 7 of the 17 male respondents in the sample voiced the confiscation of goods as a problem they faced before the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also worthy to note that a higher proportion of female informal cross-border traders pointed this out as a common challenge. This is consistent with research that shows that certain problems in ICBT tend to affect women traders more than their male counterparts (Chen, 2001). The factor that seemed to most prominently and solely affect women had to do with the response to the question about experiences of harassment at the border before the COVID-19 pandemic. None of all the 17 male respondents, compared to 4 of the 6 female respondents, said that harassment, including sexual harassment, was a common challenge they experienced at the border before the pandemic. Five of the 6 female respondents, along with 11 of the 17 male respondents, also said cumbersome clearance procedures constituted a common challenge experienced by informal cross-border traders before the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also noteworthy that 11 of all the 22 respondents indicated that the lack of and/or shortage of water in the border premises was a challenge to them

prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included 2 of the 6 females and 9 of the 17 males that were interviewed for the assessment. Of the 9 informal cross-border traders, 3 females and 6 males mentioned that before the outbreak of COVID-19, they faced the challenge of dilapidated sanitary facilities.

In addition to the common problems that informal cross-border traders said they encountered before the COVID-19 pandemic, most of them revealed that as informal traders, they were familiar with “too many and unnecessary” roadblocks along highways. They also complained that their goods were “constantly checked”; they were ordered to produce documents which they knew nothing about; had money extorted from them; and were often robbed of their goods. While most of the traders disclosed that this tended to occur in Zimbabwe, several of them narrated ordeals they had experienced in South Africa. Box 2 lists a verbatim transcription of some of the challenges the traders said they experienced on South African and Zimbabwean highways.

**Box 2. Challenges faced by cross-border traders along highways  
in South Africa and Zimbabwe**

1. Sometimes other documents that were not communicated are demanded.
2. People [treat] you differently when they know you are far from here.
3. The challenging of parkings. Sometimes when you come from Zimbabwe, they ask you not to use parkings. There are also [groups] of South African guys who say they own the street, so they come and attack you to give them money.
4. The control in December is too many. There is also high demand for bribe.
5. Road agents whether traffic cops or police also want tips.
6. Tendencies of requesting bribe.
7. Bribery and corruption issues.
8. People try to extort money from me often.
9. Corruption issues.
10. Police searches are a challenge. ZIMRA is less troublesome.
11. Problems with armed South [African] taxi associations requesting money for parking. Their justification is that Zimbabwean cars should not be allowed to ferry goods from South Africa to Zimbabwe, a South African taxi association should be doing that.
12. There is a lot of corruption along the way [where] officials demand bribes. In the end, we do not make money since we pay a lot of money along the way.
13. Police officers demanding for bribes along the way. Robberies are also encountered.
14. Road networks [are] very bad resulting in breakdowns and causing the vehicle to be unroadworthy on a single journey. Traffic cops will then say the vehicle is not roadworthy demanding bribes from us.
15. Request for bribes by police officers and poor road networks.
16. Request for bribes by police in Zimbabwe.
17. Robberies when we have breakdown, but we avoid travelling at night.
18. ZIMRA officials are sometimes a challenge along the highway. They sometimes take our goods.
19. The roadblocks are too much on the Zimbabwean side. We leave money at each roadblock robberies.

#### 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The experiences on the highways narrated by the traders and outlined in Box 2 generally underscore corruption-related challenges. They show that most of the traders (both male and female) were subjected to extortion by both State officials and ordinary people. Not only did they have officials solicit bribes from them, but they were also subjected to robberies and aggression from various groups including those that seemed to be instigating turf wars with the traders. This is reflected in such statements made by respondents such as the following:

*“Problems with armed South [African] taxi associations requesting money for parking. Their justification is that Zimbabwean cars should not be allowed to ferry goods from South Africa to Zimbabwe, a South African taxi association should be doing that.”*

*“Sometimes when you come from Zimbabwe, they ask you not to use parkings. There are also [groups] of South African guys who say they own the street, so they come and attack you to give them money.”*

The experiences narrated and outlined in Box 2 along with the pre-COVID-19 challenges experienced at the border displayed in Figure 8, such as the lack or shortage of water at border premises and dilapidated toilets and/or ablutions, corroborate with research, which shows that informal cross-border traders work in precarious conditions (Arnold and Pickles, 2011; Siegmann and Schiphorst, 2016). However, it is a wonder why despite the robberies, the traders continued to handle cash (see Table 3) even when they had bank accounts and bank cards which they could use to transact electronically.

#### 4.5. National response to COVID-19

The Government of South Africa took measures that were consistent with WHO prescriptions to curb the spread of COVID-19. The measures were also generally similar to those taken in neighbouring countries and around the world including border closures, restrictions on people’s mobility, imposition of quarantines and enforcement of stay-at-home orders (Nantulya and Mavhinga, 2020; UNECA, 2020). In his address to the nation on 15 March 2020, South Africa President Ramaphosa declared COVID-19 a national disaster in accordance with the Disaster Management Act [No. 57 of 2002] of South Africa and went on to announce that the Government would take “urgent and drastic measures to manage the spread of the disease, protect the people and reduce the impact of the virus on society and the economy” (tralac, 2020). In his second national address, on 23 March 2020, the President declared a national lockdown, initially for 21 days, and outlined more stringent measures in a comprehensive plan to limit the transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate its economic and social impact (ibid.). The response reflected in the plan could be categorized in three phases:

- (a) The first one, which began in mid-March when the COVID-19 pandemic was declared a national disaster, included a broad range of measures to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic on businesses, communities

and individuals. The measures included tax relief, the release of disaster relief funds, emergency procurement, wage support through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and funding for small businesses (ibid.).

- (b) The second aimed at stabilizing the economy, addressing the extreme decline in supply and demand for goods and services and protecting jobs. On 21 April, President Ramaphosa announced the finalization of a social and economic support package of ZAR 500 billion, which accounted for approximately 10 per cent of GDP. The package meant redirecting resources to fund health response to COVID-19, provide direct support to households and individuals for hunger and social distress relief, and provide assistance to companies in distress and protect jobs by supporting workers' wages (ibid.).
- (c) The third phase included an economic strategy aimed at driving the recovery of the economy as the country emerged from the pandemic. Central to the economic recovery strategy would be measures to stimulate demand and supply through interventions such as a substantial infrastructure building programme, the speedy implementation of economic reforms and other steps to ignite inclusive economic growth (ibid.).

On 28 December 2020, President Ramaphosa announced that South Africa would immediately return to Adjusted Level 3 the lockdown from Level 1 (South African Government News Agency, 2020). The decision was prompted by an unprecedented spike in new confirmed cases and the identification of a new variant of the coronavirus that was considered more contagious (Schuster-Bruce, 2021). By the end of February 2021, South Africa was still under Adjusted Level 3 lockdown.

The Government's main objective in its comprehensive plan was to steadily increase economic activity while implementing measures to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and provide adequate care for infected people who needed treatment. The Government, therefore, set five coronavirus alert levels in line with a risk-adjusted strategy to slow down the rates of infection and flatten the disease infection curve. The levels, as outlined in the Risk Adjustment Strategy: Schedule of Services – Draft Framework of 25 April 2020, in order of strictness and starting with the strictest, are as follows:

- (a) Level 5: drastic measures are required to contain the spread of the virus to save lives;
- (b) Level 4: some activity can be allowed to resume subject to extreme precautions required to limit community transmission and outbreaks – effective 1 May 2020;
- (c) Level 3: easing of some restrictions, including on work and social activities, to address a high risk of transmission – effective 1 June 2020;
- (d) Level 2: further easing of restrictions, but with maintenance of physical distancing and restrictions on some leisure and social activities to prevent a resurgence of the virus – effective 18 August 2020;

#### 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- (e) Level 1: removes many of the remaining restrictions on economic activity, although it may be some time before it is safe for all sectors to return to full operation – effective 21 September 2020 (tralac, 2020).

The phased reopening of the economy started on 1 May 2020. Four months later, in his address to the nation on 15 September 2020, President Ramaphosa indicated that South Africa would move to Alert Level 1 effective midnight on Sunday, 20 September 2020. The national state of disaster was, however, extended to 15 October 2020.

On 1 October 2020, the Government reopened national borders to business and leisure travel subject to some conditions. These included the expectation that all travellers visiting the country would always abide by such regulations as the mandatory wearing of masks, practising social distancing in public spaces, regular washing or sanitizing of hands, and presentation of negative COVID-19 test results that were not older than 72 hours from the time of departure from the travellers' countries of origin. Upon arrival at a port of entry, the travellers would be screened for any COVID-19 symptoms or contact with people who might have been infected with the COVID-19 virus (ibid.).

#### 4.6. National economic recovery plans and COVID-19

The upsurge in COVID-19 cases from March 2020 put an already vulnerable South African economy under pressure. Before COVID-19 broke out and its declaration as a global pandemic, the South African economy had experienced two consecutive quarters of recession (South Africa, The Presidency, 2020a). The pandemic only deepened an existing economic crisis as millions had already been losing jobs while many still in employment had gone without incomes for extended periods of time (ibid.). The Government announced the three-phased Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan in view of the pandemic designed to achieve the following:

- (f) Engage and preserve – including a comprehensive health response to save lives and curb the spread of the pandemic;
- (g) Recovery and reform – including interventions to restore the economy while controlling the health risks;
- (h) Reconstruct and transform – which entailed building a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy (ibid.).

The Government further elaborated priority interventions within the plan including:

- (a) Aggressive infrastructure investment;
- (b) Employment-oriented strategic localization, reindustrialization and export promotion;
- (c) Energy security;



- (d) Support for tourism recovery and growth;
- (e) Gender equality and economic inclusion of women and youth;
- (f) Green economy interventions;
- (g) Mass public employment interventions;
- (h) Strengthening food security;
- (i) Macroeconomic interventions (ibid.).

The Government pointed out that the various interventions in the plan would be underpinned by the need to protect vulnerable workers, households and firms; build consumer, investor and public confidence; deepen industrialization through localization; pursue environmental sustainability; deliver quick wins; and continue providing relief to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 (ibid.). The Government, however, did not mention ICBT and informal traders in general in its recovery plan or any of its other pronouncements. The omission seems to suggest that the Government either does not acknowledge or was perhaps unaware of the informal sector and traders (Wegerif, 2020).

The Government did, however, make provisions for spaza shops or tuck shops. Though not particularly ICBT ventures, some spaza shops tend to operate in the informal sector/economy. The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) in particular provided some funding to help owners of spaza shops and general dealer stores that had taken a knock from the coronavirus pandemic lockdown (*Mail & Guardian*, 2020; Nyanda, 2020). Qualifying spaza shop and general dealer store owners would receive support amounting to ZAR 7,000, including ZAR 3,500 in working capital investment and another ZAR 3,500 in the form of revolving credit usable at pre-selected wholesalers from which they would order merchandise. Business owners who wished to access the funds were expected to meet certain requirements. These included South African citizenship, the possession of a valid (and/but even temporary) trading permit, the possession of a business licence in the case of general dealer store owners, and that the trading permit and business licence be submitted as original documents (ibid.). Further, only municipality-issued permits or licences were considered valid. As hinted and going by the definition of the informal economy/sector and ICBT given in section 3 of this assessment, it is worth noting that the requirements to access DSBD COVID-19-related support clearly disqualify informal cross-border traders and other actors in the informal sector/economy.

#### 4.7. National strategies and action plans for informal cross-border trade in relation to COVID-19

The Government of South Africa's various interventions and stimulus packages included tax relief, disaster relief funds and funding to small businesses. Its effort to protect small businesses in the face of COVID-19 included funding made available to small and medium-sized enterprises in sectors such as tourism and agriculture. The support package for the social economy from the Government amounted to well over USD 30 billion or approximately 10 per cent of the country's GDP; this was mostly made available to vulnerable small and medium-sized enterprises (Gondwe, 2020). The Government also instituted measures to allow for tax subsidies for small and medium-sized enterprises with a turnover of USD 2.7 million or less (South Africa, Department of National Treasury, 2020).

Although no particular mention of ICBT and informal cross-border traders was made, the broad range of measures the Government announced to mitigate the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic on businesses, communities and individuals included tax relief, release of disaster relief funds, emergency procurement, wage support through the UIF and funding for small businesses (Patel, 2020). The Government's efforts to deal with the socioeconomic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country through such relief packages for selected vulnerable groups in this regard included a USD 8.4 billion cushion for the unemployed (Gondwe, 2020).

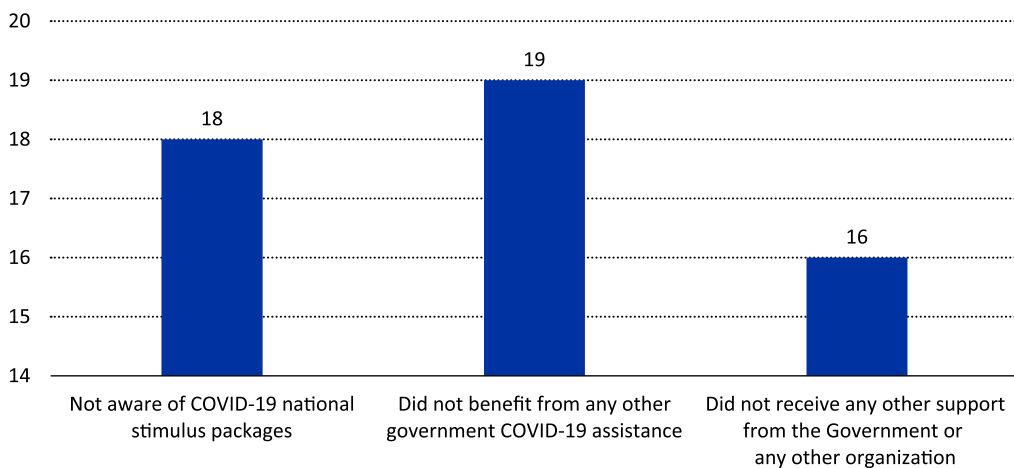
However, the strict formalization and compliance requirements to access funds made available through most of the measures meant that the funds were beyond the reach of most informal businesses, cross-border traders included. The Spaza Relief Fund for stock purchases, for instance, was unavailable to stores that are not registered with the UIF, the Tax Revenue Office, and the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (Christensen, 2020). This means that most informal businesses, such as cross-border trade, cannot access the funds.

Moreover, the COVID-19 policy guidelines do not make it clear whether the country's policy and strategic responses to the pandemic cater to ICBT or informal cross-border traders. There is also no clear indication that informal cross-border traders received any form of direct financial support to their businesses. The responses given by informal cross-border traders presented in Figure 9 seem to confirm this. The figure depicts levels of awareness of the existence of a government COVID-19 national stimulus package or any such equivalent programmes among informal cross-border traders. The figure also shows whether the informal cross-border traders received any support from the Government from such stimulus packages or equivalent programmes. It is clear from the information shown in the figure that most respondents were not aware that the Government had a COVID-19 stimulus package or similar programmes. Only 4 of the 22 respondents acknowledged awareness of the existence of a government COVID-19 national stimulus package. Of the 4 who were aware of the package, 1 was female and the other 3 were male. It is also noteworthy

concerning these 4 respondents that two (1 male, 1 female) were South African and the other two (both male) were Zimbabwean. The high level of lack of awareness of the government stimulus package and/or relief programmes for COVID-19 could probably be because most of the respondents were non-South African.

Two of the respondents, both male and Zimbabwean, indicated that they had benefited from government assistance even though, when probed further, one of them said to have not received any COVID-19 pandemic-related assistance. The other respondent is said to have received assistance in the form of groceries.

**Figure 9. Distribution of respondents who were unaware of or did not receive COVID-19 national stimulus packages**



Source: Field data.

Note: n=22.

Most respondents also indicated that they had not received any COVID-19-related assistance. Two female respondents disclosed that they had received assistance in the form of “information” and “Google Classroom facilities for school-age dependants”, respectively. Another 4 respondents, all male, disclosed that they had received assistance in the form of a visit from government workers to check their temperature; had been “given a telephone number to call a United Nations (UN) office”; had received groceries; and had had their obligation to pay for services suspended. However, the respondents whose obligation to pay for services was suspended did not specify what these services were.

The second phase in President Ramaphosa’s economic response strategy sought to stabilize the economy, address the extreme decline in supply and demand, and protect jobs (South Africa, The Presidency, 2020c). The social and economic support package the President announced on 21 April 2020 amounted to ZAR 500 billion, which accounted for approximately 10 per cent of the GDP. The principal focus of the package included, among other things, redirecting resources to fund the health response to COVID-19 and providing direct support to households and individuals for the relief of hunger and social distress (ibid.). As indicated, the Government did not clearly state whether people operating in the informal sector or those engaged

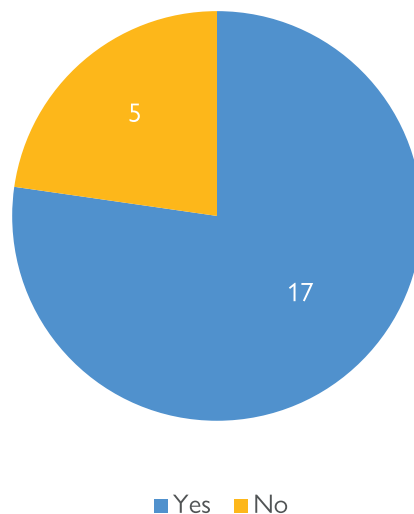
in ICBT would benefit from any of the various stimulus packages it provided. This can certainly not be gleaned from the Government's statement that support would be provided for households and individuals to relieve them of hunger and social distress.

#### 4.8. Informal cross-border traders' livelihood alternatives in response to COVID-19

The informal sector business slowed down rapidly after the state of national disaster and national lockdowns were announced. Informal traders of fresh produce had to indefinitely suspend their businesses and lost all stocks immediately after this happened (Wegerif, 2020). Besides fulfilling actual economic needs from the trade through employment creation and income generation, informal cross-border traders also contribute to the integration of the economies in which they operate (Nshimbi, 2015). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to determine whether these traders developed alternative livelihoods strategies to lessen the negative effects of the pandemic.

As Figures 10–12 show, it is firstly noteworthy that the majority of the informal cross-border traders, regardless of sex, indicated that cross-border trade was their only source of employment, income and means of survival. Secondly, Figure 11 shows that over a third of the traders indicated that they engaged in ICBT because they were driven into the sector to survive. A considerable number of them were also driven into the formal sector by the lack of formal employment. Four more respondents (all male) said that they engaged in ICBT to fend for their families.

**Figure 10. Distribution of respondents who ventured and did not venture into cross-border trade as source of income/employment or means of survival**

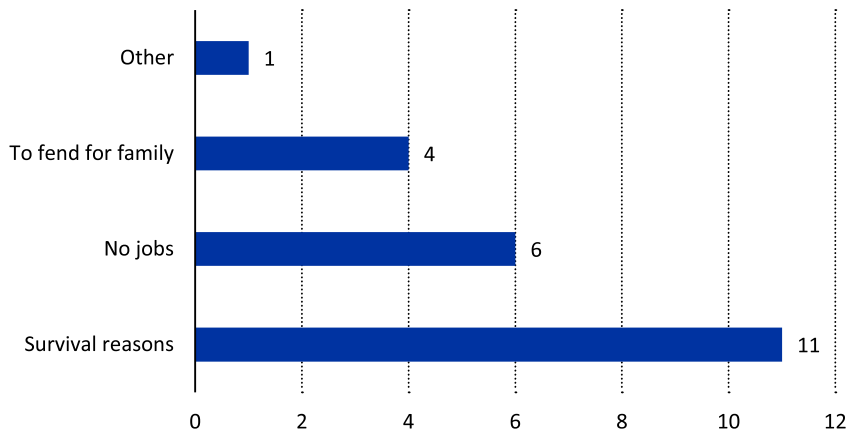


Source: Field data.

Notes: 1. n=22.

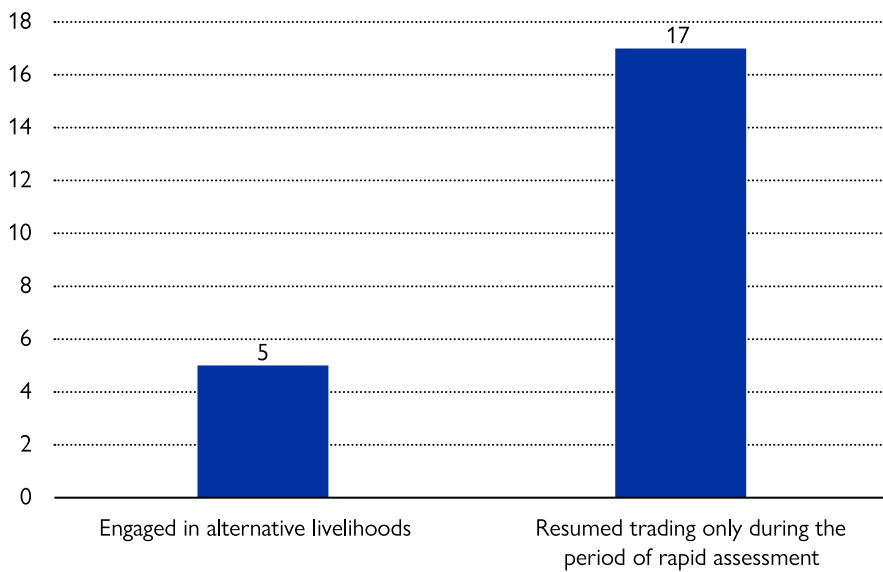
2. Yes – ventured into ICBT; no – did not venture into ICBT.

Figure 11. Reasons for venturing into cross-border trade



Source: Field data.  
Note: n=22.

Figure 12. Economic coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: Field data.  
Note: n=22.

Figure 10 shows that ICBT was the only means of income for 17 of the 22 traders who were interviewed in the rapid assessment. Four of the total 6 females were among these 17, who also included 13 male traders. Their responses show a high proportion of informal cross-border traders within the sexes and between the sexes who engage in this business out of necessity. This is further confirmed by what some of them indicated when asked to give the main reason why they chose to venture into ICBT. Eleven of the 22 respondents indicated that they did so to survive (Figure 11). The 11 were represented by half of the female traders, or 3, and 8 of

## 4. COVID-19: CHALLENGES, IMPACT AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

the male traders. Another 6, including 3 females and 3 males, said they ventured into ICBT as there were “no jobs”. What they meant by this is that there was a lack of formal employment opportunities. A further 4, all male, said they engaged in ICBT to fend for their families. Lastly, a male respondent said he did so since his parents could not afford to pay the university fees for his and his siblings’ education. In general, each of these responses indicates that the average respondent pursued ICBT out of necessity and not as a matter of choice.

The informal cross-border traders were also asked to indicate whether they had continued trading, changed livelihoods strategies or engaged in alternative economic activities during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, when restrictions on human mobility were imposed and borders were closed by the Government of South Africa and the Government of Zimbabwe. Specifically, 5 of the 22 sampled traders responded to this question, as Figure 12 shows. Among the 5 were 2 females and 3 males. The 2 female respondents said they had not changed economic activities per se. Instead, they had resorted to using their household savings to survive during the hard lockdown. The 3 male respondents said that they had respectively resorted to using their savings in addition to selling household goods, assets or belongings; selling livestock crops; and engaging in artisanal mining. When asked if the strategies to which they had resorted during the national lockdown were viable sources of livelihoods, all the respondents respectively said selling crops, household goods/assets/belongings, and using household savings were not viable. The respondents were probed to explain if the livelihood strategies to which they had briefly switched during the national lockdowns were sustainable. In response, each of the respondents indicated that the alternative strategies were not viable. They further explained that the strategies were unsustainable. Furthermore, they said that they would not consider moving to or pursuing the ventures on a long-term basis. The 2 male respondents who had mentioned artisanal mining and selling livestock as, respectively, “fairly viable” and “very viable” said they would not pursue the activities as long-term ventures or post the COVID-19 pandemic. These responses were validated by the fact that all the 22 respondents confirmed that they had returned to ICBT during the period the data was collected for the rapid assessment. It is worth noting that data collection and the subsequent assessment of the data were conducted when South Africa had lowered the national lockdown restrictions to Level 3 and, later, to Adjusted Level 3. During this period, restrictions on mobility were relatively relaxed and travel was allowed as long as people produced negative PCR or COVID-19 test results, wore face masks in public places at all times and observed social distancing, among other regulatory requirements (South Africa, Parliament of, 2021a and 2021b).

The types of livelihoods to which the informal cross-border traders had switched during the lockdown confirm that the lack of employment was the main reason why they had initially engaged in ICBT (Figure 11). They also underscored the economic impact of the national lockdown on the informal cross-border traders. Resorting to using up one's savings, selling off household goods/assets/belongings and selling off their livestock indicates the depth and severe impact of the lockdown on the traders. It also points to the dire situation in which the traders found themselves. This dire situation is also seen in that livestock has such cultural and symbolic significance in this part of the world that it is not disposed of lightly (Ainslie, 2013; Anderson, 1993). For one to sell off their livestock suggests they were distraught.





## 5. Gender and COVID-19 management in national responses, strategies and action plans

### 5.1. Gender and COVID-19 management nationally

This rapid assessment identified some differentiated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic between men and women during the national lockdown in South Africa. It is also worth noting that at the time of announcing the national state of disaster, South Africa was already grappling with another enormous challenge besides the COVID-19 pandemic. President Ramaphosa referred to the problem of GBV in South Africa as “another pandemic” (News24Wire, 2020).

South Africa recorded a total of 106,931 COVID-19 hospital admissions and 18,289 COVID-19-related deaths by 28 November 2020 (NICD, 2020). According to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (2020b), women represented about 56 per cent of the 106,931 recorded hospital admissions in the country. COVID-19, therefore, seems to have impacted females more than males in this respect. The higher likelihood of men (about 51% versus 49%) to die from the disease in South Africa is, however, consistent with the global trends (UN-Women, 2020).

The economic and social impacts of the national lockdown were also more severe on women than on men. Despite accounting for less than 47 per cent of the workforce in February 2020, for example, more women lost jobs in the initial months of the national lockdown (February–April) than men, accounting for about two thirds of all the 3 million net job losses in the country (Spaull et al., 2020). Even with South Africa moving from lockdown Level 3 to the less restrictive lockdown Level 1 in October 2020, the substantial recovery the country experienced in employment was greater for men than it was for women (ibid.). Women were even less likely to receive unemployment grants in October 2020 than men despite the higher likelihood to be unemployed (ibid.).

GBV cases in South Africa also increased during the national lockdown (Lynch and Teagle, 2020). In a statement to the nation, President Ramaphosa said South Africa heeded the international call to prioritize GBV in its national response to COVID-19 and he reiterated that the Government would continue to implement the Emergency Response Plan to end GBV announced in 2019 (South Africa, The Presidency, 2020b). In his statement, the President went on to say that the Gender-Based Violence National Command Centre would remain operational and that vulnerable women and children would receive psychosocial support, shelter and medico-legal services throughout the lockdown. The President further said that he had directed

the Minister of Police to see to it that the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units were reinforced at police stations in the country during the lockdown and beyond. In his statement, the President also disclosed that the Interim Steering Committee on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide had been consulting with civil society organizations and developing guidelines and protocols for the management of GBV in the context of COVID-19. He also commended the country's law enforcement officials for the ways in which they had swiftly arrested and charged 148 suspects for GBV crimes since the beginning of the lockdown.

## 5.2. Gender and COVID-19 management at the border

This assessment has shown that women constitute the majority of informal cross-border traders in Africa, accounting for up to 70 per cent and higher in some countries (Bugingo, 2018; Sommer and Nshimbi, 2018). Yet, their work is precarious and they operate in precarious conditions, face gender-specific risks, and are more susceptible to harassment and exploitation (Ndala and Moto Jnr., 2019) by fellow traders and border officials. It is, therefore, not surprising that the only 4 respondents from the 22 sampled for this assessment who indicated that harassment by officials was a problem the informal cross-border traders experienced at the Beitbridge port of entry before the outbreak of COVID-19 were all females (see Figure 8). Most of the female informal traders in the sample also complained and indicated that their goods had been confiscated by customs officials without any clear explanation. In respect of the concerns of multiple physical inspection of their goods by border officials, some of the female traders expressed concern over gender-sensitive issues at the BCP. These included sharing of customs clearance spaces with commercial truckers and motorists, the shortage or lack of water at border premises, and closed and/or dilapidated ablution facilities.

Despite this, the women in the sample generally tended to be more aware of and compliant than their male counterparts with COVID-19 procedures, regulations, and requirements at the BCP and the markets/malls. Most women confirmed that they frequently used hand sanitizers and washed their hands with soap, had their temperature checked, observed social distancing, and subjected themselves to PCR tests and carried negative test certificates as proof (see Figures 6 and 7). Although necessary, most of these infection prevention and control measures had cost implications. Some of the costs, such as those for conducting the PCR tests and costs of masks, had to be borne by the informal cross-border traders themselves. All the traders, including all women, in the sample complained that they could hardly afford the test. This was due to the test being expensive and costing more in Zimbabwe than in South Africa. Due to this, some of the Zimbabwean informal cross-border traders disclosed that they would time their cross-border movements in such a way that they found themselves in South Africa by the time the certificate expired so that they could take the test on that side of the border. The test result certificate being valid for 72 hours only meant that the traders had to take the test frequently as they were regular travellers, and consequently increasing the operational costs.

The majority of women also tend to have low levels of literacy and lack access to finance for investing in their businesses (Ndala and Moto Jnr., 2019). The national lockdown instituted to curb the spread of COVID-19 worsened the precarious work of the informal cross-border traders and the conditions in which they operate, and affected women more by further widening existing financial inequalities between them and their male counterparts. This assessment has revealed that the socioeconomic impact of the national lockdown was more severe on women than on men. In addition to the increase in GBV during the lockdown, many more women lost jobs, and despite South Africa seeing substantial recovery in employment between June and October 2020, fewer women than men got jobs (Spaull et al., 2020 and 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated national lockdown also exacerbated the dire financial constraints female informal cross-border traders faced and limited their ability to continue running their businesses, because most of them carried the double burden of singly heading and providing for their households (Chisiri, 2020). Besides the inability to conduct business due to restrictions on mobility to curb the spread of COVID-19, therefore, the financial constraints that women experienced were worsened by the fact that they used up (some of) their capital to support their families during the lockdown (Wegerif, 2020). In the case of the respondents sampled for the rapid assessment, the two females who answered the question about the alternative livelihoods to which they had switched during the national lockdown had used up their business capital. They used up their household savings, as they had no other viable alternative livelihood strategies to engage in to support their families as previously mentioned. None of the women in the sample received any assistance through government stimulus packages that were designed to help lessen the impact of the national lockdown (see section 4.7). The rapid assessment determined that most women informal cross-border traders were not even aware of the existence of the stimulus packages.



## 6. Conclusion

The informal sector reviewed in this rapid assessment excludes illicit activities involving trade in prohibited goods and banned substances. The review focused on ICBT in South Africa and the Southern African region and particularly on the South African side of the South Africa–Zimbabwe border at the Beitbridge port of entry. The assessment attempted to examine the needs of informal cross-border traders by highlighting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the policy responses of the Government to combat the disease. Policy responses to combat COVID-19 in the form of national lockdowns affected actors in the informal sector, as they restricted movement which was indispensable for the traders to conduct their businesses.

ICBT is a complex reality in Southern Africa. Researchers grapple with how to measure and determine the actual size and volumes of trade in the sector. The difficulty in measuring ICBT compounds the challenge of assessing the needs of informal cross-border traders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The policy responses formulated by governments to fight COVID-19 make conditions difficult for the traders. The assessment has shown that most of the traders engage in ICBT, as they see it as a means of survival. In addition to the limitations imposed on them to operate, the traders lack funds to finance their businesses.

Despite the difficulty of measuring ICBT, some studies conclusively suggest that ICBT significantly contributes to regional trade in Southern Africa. This is apart from the important contribution it makes through employment creation, income generation and sustaining the livelihoods of, especially, the vulnerable. ICBT brings direct benefits to countries such as South Africa, as traders purchase goods produced in the country and use services in the country's hospitality and transportation industries for lodging and to ferry their goods to countries of destination. However, informal cross-border traders find it difficult to finance their businesses. This challenge is more pronounced for female traders, who also tend to have low levels of literacy. The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions to contain spread of the disease exacerbated the challenges these traders face, as their businesses came to a standstill. The Government of South Africa announced and made provisions to support entrepreneurs who ran small and medium-scale enterprises (*Mail & Guardian*, 2020; Nyanda, 2020). However, it did not specify whether informal sector actors or those engaged in ICBT would be allowed to access any of the various stimulus packages it provided. It is also difficult to tell whether these traders were eligible for government packages aimed at relieving households and individuals from hunger and social distress.

Seeing as financial constraints to run informal trade have increased and that women are likely more affected than their male counterparts, it is necessary to assess the specific needs from the affected parties to proffer appropriate solutions.



## 7. Recommendations

The following proposals are made to various stakeholders for the short, medium and long term.

### A. Short term

#### 1. Information and awareness-raising

Provide information, such as on relief measures, made available by the Government to reduce the negative effects of the national lockdown and the associated restrictions on actors in the informal economy/sector, especially cross-border traders.

#### 2. Waivers for informal cross-border traders to conduct business

Informal cross-border traders should be given special exemptions to conduct business when stringent COVID-19 regulations are enforced. This will help lessen the negative economic and financial impacts of the regulations on the traders.

#### 3. Subsidies for informal cross-border traders to cover PCR test fees

Subsidies should be extended to informal cross-border traders to cover fees for PCR tests. This will help mitigate the negative financial impacts on the traders as well as chances of compelling some of the traders to opt for fake PCR certificates.

#### 4. Harmonization of COVID-19 certificate validity window

A harmonized time frame of the validity of COVID-19 certificates which informal cross-border traders should produce at the border as part of the travel requirements during the pandemic should be established for the SADC region. The 72-hour validity window stipulated in South African legislation differs from the 48 hours window in Zimbabwe.

### B. Medium to long term

#### 1. Recognizing the informal economy/sector

In the long term, ICBT should be recognized as a permanent reality in the SADC region. It should also be distinguished from the underground economy and associated activities. This will provide opportunities for supporting the sector, as well as unleash its potential to contribute to livelihoods and to regional integration.

#### 2. Introduction of the Simplified Trade Regime

Recognition of ICBT should be accompanied by measures to help informal cross-border traders fulfil customs procedures and requirements such as the STR, implemented by COMESA and the EAC separately.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3. Training, sensitization and rights awareness campaigns

Training and sensitization on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse should be provided to various stakeholders at the BCP in order to address GBV and the harassment of informal cross-border traders. The training should especially be targeted at border management officials and informal cross-border traders. People who work at the border and those who use it should be made aware of migrant protection issues and encouraged to take necessary steps to prevent abuses.

### 4. Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming as well as advocating mechanisms to help contain the harassment of especially women informal cross-border traders should accompany training and sensitization of border management officials and informal cross-border traders.

### 5. Financial inclusion for informal cross-border traders

Mechanisms for financing ICBT that consider training needs in numeracy and financial management/accounting should be established. This will enable the informal cross-border traders to transform their businesses into sustainable ventures.

### 6. Flow monitoring and population mobility mapping

The flow, dynamics and mobility trends of informal cross-border traders at the BCP and other crossing points should be determined. This will provide detailed information on destinations and goods in which they trade as well as migrant intentions.



# Annexes

## Annex 1: Terms of assessment

### **A rapid situation and needs assessment of informal cross-border trade in South Africa**

#### **Background and rationale**

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC), informal cross-border trade (ICBT) is significant, accounting for between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of the total intra-SADC trade, with an estimated value of USD 17.6 billion. Women, who make up approximately 70 per cent of informal traders, face gender-specific risks and are more susceptible to harassment and exploitation by corrupt officials. The majority of female traders are relatively poor, with low levels of education, and trade in a high volume of low-value goods, including food products, cosmetics, cloth and handicrafts. Women informal cross-border trade support some of the most fragile and impoverished communities, and so any threat to ICBT poses a threat to the most vulnerable and least resilient. Further to a marked increase in gender-based violence and a decrease in access to sexual and reproductive health, COVID-19 is expected to affect women significantly more than men especially through widening existing financial inequalities between men and women.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Southern Africa has led to border closures and travel restrictions throughout the region. Where cross-border trade is permitted, it has been for larger commercial flows and not for the movement of people, accompanied by quarantine measures for varying periods, often at the cost of the traveller. Additional security measures have been put in place to patrol borders. For informal cross-border traders, these changes have had a catastrophic impact on their livelihoods and are unable to conduct their routine trade. COVID-19 restrictions have hit informal trade harder than other sectors, with women hit particularly hard by economic losses. There is likely to be further pressure on the informal sector post-COVID-19.

IOM is implementing the project Supporting Informal Cross-border Traders in Southern Africa to Do Business Safely during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The project is being managed by the IOM office in Zambia and is being implemented in conjunction with IOM missions in Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The objective of this project is to contribute towards the enhanced protection of the health and economic rights of informal cross-border traders through the facilitation of continued trade during the COVID 19 pandemic. The expected outcomes are: (1) consensus exists on policy direction to favourably incorporate ICBT and

informal traders into national COVID-19 trade plans and, to the extent possible, preparing for the COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery plans; (2) border control posts (BCPs) and border officials have improved capacity to facilitate a healthier and safer environment for informal cross-border traders to operate; and (3) small-scale cross-border traders/informal cross-border traders demonstrate increased ability to trade safely and operate at the BCP even though there are restrictions as a consequence of COVID-19.

This project will be implemented in four countries in Southern Africa, namely Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This is intended to be an emergency response project and implemented over a period of seven months, starting from October 2020 to April 2021.

### Scope of work

Within the context of this project, a rapid situation and needs assessment of ICBT in select countries and borders in Southern Africa will be undertaken. The rapid situation and needs assessment will be undertaken in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and at three BCPs, namely Beitbridge (Zimbabwe–South Africa), Mwami–Mchinji (Zambia–Malawi) and Chirundu one-stop border post (OSBP) (Zambia–Zimbabwe)

The rapid situation and needs assessment will be carried out in the first two months of the project as part of the inception phase. It will serve to inform activities under the three components of the project including the national-level policy dialogue and activities undertaken at the BCP level involving border officials and CBTAs that are part of this project.

This rapid situation and needs assessment in South Africa will include both national-level and border-specific analyses. The selected research consultant will be expected to also analyse the situation at the Beitbridge port of entry (Zimbabwe–South Africa), working closely with other selected research consultants who will be undertaking the corresponding analysis on the other side of the border. The rapid situation and needs assessment is also intended to create a gender-mainstreamed baseline.

The rapid situation and needs assessment will cover the following issues in relation to ICBT during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- (a) An overview of existing national COVID-19 policies and strategies and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines to support informal cross-border traders within the context of the COVID 19 national response;
- (b) An overview of whether/how ICBT has been incorporated (or not) into existing COVID-19 response plans, policies and strategic guidance at the national level;
- (c) Impact of COVID-19 on ICBT including the gender dimensions;

- (d) Impact of national or regional COVID-19 agreements, guidelines on ICBT and informal cross-border traders, and the extent to which such will facilitate resumption of safe trade;
- (e) The extent to which informal cross-border traders have switched to other alternative livelihoods in the wake of COVID-19 and the viability of such alternative livelihoods;
- (f) Assess the potential opportunities and feasibility of technological solutions to support ICBT and informal cross-border traders;
- (g) Indication as to whether/how ICBT is being considered by national governments as part of the post-COVID 19 recovery plans, policies and strategies;
- (h) The number of ICBTs that have benefited from COVID-19 stimulus packages and recommendations for consideration;
- (i) Key issues identified by government officials from a policy perspective regarding the issues relevant to the needs of informal cross-border traders;
- (j) National-level and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines to support informal cross-border traders within the context of COVID-19 national response;
- (k) An overview of relevant national plans that support the implementation of the International Health Regulation (IHR) (2005) requirements in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (l) Whether ICBT is taking place at the specific BCP at the time of the assessment takes place, and if it is, the volume, nature and scale of ICBT at the time of the assessment;
- (m) Current border and travel restrictions that are in place at the time of the assessment;
- (n) The effect of these restrictions on ICBT and the priority needs of informal cross-border traders, assuming that these restrictions are in place;
- (o) Mapping and profiling of CBTAs and other relevant associations;
- (p) The estimated number of cross-border traders (by gender) registered by CBTAs and other relevant organizations in the location of the specific BCP;
- (q) The number of traders registered with CBTAs and other trade-related associations on each side of the border, at the given BCP at the time of the assessment;
- (r) The location, size and composition of trader markets within the border vicinity/relevant to cross-border trade (e.g. the COMESA market in Lusaka);

- (s) Identification of trade information desks (TIDS) and trade information desk officers (TIDOs) and informal cross-border traders to be trained as part of the project;
- (t) A clear outline of the capacity-building needs at the BCPs as well as priority health-related infrastructure requirements at BCPs (and border market areas) considering COVID-19;
- (u) Number (percentage) of informal cross-border traders reporting access to infection prevention and control measures at BCPs; number of (percentage) of informal cross-border traders who reported having used a hand washing facility at the BCP in their most recent travels; number of infrastructure measures put in place which respond to the needs of informal cross-border traders including the specific needs of women traders;
- (v) Infection prevention and control measures currently in place and the extent to which they serve the needs of informal cross-border traders, including a review of SOPs/protocols developed for each BCP, the levels of application of these protocols and the gaps in implementation;
- (w) Identification of relevant inter-agency and cross-border coordination mechanisms and needs including at the national and BCP levels;
- (x) Procedural guidance and training requirements for (health and non-health) front-line border officials to facilitate informal trade;
- (y) Other issues relevant to understand ICBT at the national and specific BCP levels during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The selected research consultant is expected to undertake field visits to the Beitbridge port of entry and Musina border town (Zimbabwe–South Africa) for purposes of data collection.

The rapid situation and needs assessment will be based on an agreed upon methodology, which will be jointly agreed with the IOM project management site at the start of the project. This will include a rapid literature review, site visits to the BCPs in coordination with government officials from the concerned country, as well as consultations with a range of stakeholders including border officials, national-level policymakers from various government agencies in the country as well as with the CBTAs and other relevant trade entities.

### **Mainstreaming gender**

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in each context. In the context of these terms of reference, mainstreaming gender into the rapid situation and needs assessment means ensuring

that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration during the design and execution of the rapid assessment and are fully integrated within the final report presented by the selected research consultant. In doing so, this rapid situation and needs assessment will contribute to the inclusion and promotion of women in ICBT as contributing agents to sustainable development.

### Responsibilities and time frames

The incumbent will be responsible for the following deliverables, as per the following time frames:

- (a) Undertake a rapid literature/desk review of available recent publications and reports on informal-cross border trade in the region in general and in South Africa in particular (by end of week 1).
- (b) Draft an inception report that provides an overview of the proposed methodology to be used to undertake the rapid situation and needs assessment. The methodology and tools must be agreed upon and synchronized with other experts conducting the same assessment in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe (by end of week 2).
- (c) Draft a rapid situation and needs assessment report that includes all areas outlined in the proposed scope of work, with special reference to the capacity gaps and needs, and quick wins which may be leveraged to promote ICBT, feedback from field visits to BCPs, and any additional feedback provided by IOM and other relevant stakeholders (by end of week 4).
- (d) Produce a final rapid situation and needs assessment report that integrates feedback provided by IOM and other relevant stakeholders, as well as a policy brief summarizing the findings of the report and a PowerPoint presentation of key findings and recommendations (by end of week 8).

### Competencies

The incumbent is expected to demonstrate the following values and competencies:

#### Values

- Inclusion and respect for diversity: respects and promotes individual and cultural differences; encourages diversity and inclusion wherever possible.
- Integrity and transparency: maintains high ethical standards and acts in a manner consistent with organizational principles/rules and standards of conduct.
- Professionalism: demonstrates ability to work in a composed, competent and committed manner and exercises careful judgment in meeting day-to-day challenges.

### Core competencies – behavioural indicators

- Teamwork: develops and promotes effective collaboration within and across units to achieve shared goals and optimize results.
- Using appropriate software for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of migration data sets.
- Delivering results: produces and delivers quality results in a service-oriented and timely manner; is action oriented and committed to achieving agreed outcomes.
- Managing and sharing knowledge: continuously seeks to learn, share knowledge and innovate.
- Accountability: takes ownership for achieving the Organization's priorities and assumes responsibility for own action and delegated work.
- Communication: encourages and contributes to clear and open communication; explains complex matters in an informative, inspiring and motivational way.

### Education and experience

The successful consultant should have the following qualifications and experience:

- Advanced university degree in international relations, public health, migration management or a related field;
- Extensive knowledge of immigration and border security and management, ICBT in the region and in South Africa, trade facilitation and customs, or other relevant areas;
- Minimum of 10 years of relevant professional experience working for Government or an intergovernmental organization in a related area of immigration and border management;
- Proven previous working experience consisting of substantial involvement in assessments, evaluations, and/or reviews in related areas;
- Working experience with senior officials within government, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations;
- Full computer literacy, including familiarity with research and basic statistical tools;
- Excellent written and spoken English; knowledge of local languages an advantage;
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and establish harmonious and effective relationships.

## How to apply

Applications must be sent by email to [pretoriacvs@iom.int](mailto:pretoriacvs@iom.int) no later than 20 November 2020. Applications should contain:

- Technical proposal including a letter of motivation, methodology, work plan, detailed curriculum vitae;
- Financial proposal including professional fees, costs relating to professional editing and design of print ready final report;
- Proof of previous related work – at least two examples of written work of a similar scope and at least two traceable references.

## Annex 2: List of informants

**Table 5. List of informants who were interviewed in the rapid assessment**

Respondent code	Gender		Age	Nationality and country of residence
SA-1		M	28	South Africa
SA-2		M	37	South Africa
Zim-1		M	33	Zimbabwe
SA-3	F		40	South Africa
Zim-2		M	23	Zimbabwe
SA-4	F		45	South Africa
Zim-3		M	37	Zimbabwe
Zim-4		M	30	Zimbabwe
Zim-5		M	42	Zimbabwe
SA-5		M	38	South Africa
Zim-6	F		39	Zimbabwe
Zim-7		M	24	Zimbabwe
Zim-8		M	58	Zimbabwe
Zim-9	F		40	Zimbabwe
Zim-10		M	37	Zimbabwe
Zim-11		M	45	Zimbabwe
Zim-12	F		36	Zimbabwe
Zim-13		M	37	Zimbabwe
Zim-14	F		34	Zimbabwe
Zim-15		M	39	Zimbabwe
Zim-16		M	41	Zimbabwe
Zim-17		M	35	Zimbabwe
Total	22	6	16	

## Annex 3: Rapid situation and needs assessment matrix

Table 6. Rapid situation and needs assessment matrix

Situation and needs assessment issue	Proposed data collection tool					
	Literature/ Desk review	Information source	Key informant interviews	Individual interviews	Stakeholder analysis	Observation checklist
An overview of existing national COVID-19 policies and strategies and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines to support informal cross-border traders within the context of COVID-19 national response	√	National COVID-19 policies and strategies, BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines			√	
An overview of whether/how informal cross-border trade (ICBT) has been incorporated (or not) into existing COVID-19 response plans, policies and strategic guidance at the national level	√	National COVID-19 response plans, policies and strategies	√	√	√	
Indication as to whether/how ICBT is being considered by national governments as part of the post-COVID-19 recovery plans, policies and strategies	√	Post-COVID-19 recovery plans, policies and strategies; other relevant publications	√			
Key issues identified by government officials from a policy perspective regarding the issues relevant to the needs of informal cross-border traders	√	Recent publications	√	√		
National-level and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines to support informal cross-border traders within the context of COVID-19 national response	√	National-level and BCP-specific multisectoral action plans/guidelines within the context of the COVID-19 national response	√			



RAPID SITUATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADERS  
AT THE BEITBRIDGE PORT OF ENTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Situation and needs assessment issue	Proposed data collection tool					
	Literature/ Desk review	Information source	Key informant interviews	Individual interviews	Stakeholder analysis	Observation checklist
An overview of relevant national plans that support the implementation of the International Health Regulation (IHR) (2005) requirements in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic	√	IHR 2005; national plans that support the implementation of the IHR 2005	√		√	
Whether ICBT is taking place at the specific BCP at the time of the assessment takes place, and if it is, the volume, nature and scale of ICBT at the time of the assessment			√	√		
Current border and travel restrictions that are in place at the time of the assessment	√	Government regulations	√			√
The effect of these restrictions on ICBT and the priority needs of informal cross-border traders, assuming that these restrictions are in place				√		√
Mapping and profiling of cross-border traders associations (CBTAs) and other relevant associations			√	√		
The estimated number of cross-border traders (by gender) registered by CBTA and other relevant organizations in the location of the specific BCP	√		√			
The number of traders registered with CBTAs and other trade-related associations on each side of the border; at the given BCP at the time of the assessment	√	Informal CBTA register	√			
The location, size and composition of trader markets within the border vicinity/relevant to cross-border trade (e.g. the COMESA market in Lusaka)	√		√			

Situation and needs assessment issue	Proposed data collection tool					
	Literature/ Desk review	Information source	Key informant interviews	Individual interviews	Stakeholder analysis	Observation checklist
Identification of trade information desks (TIDS) and trade information desk officers (TIDO) and informal cross-border traders to be trained as part of the project			√	√		√
Priority health-related infrastructure requirements at BCPs (and border market areas) considering COVID-19			√	√		√
Infection prevention and control measures currently in place and the extent to which they serve the needs of informal cross-border traders, including a review of SOPs/protocols developed for each BCP, the levels of application of these protocols and the gaps in implementation			√	√		√
Identification of relevant inter-agency and cross-border coordination mechanisms and needs including at the national and BCP levels	√		√			
Procedural guidance and training requirements for (health and non-health) front-line border officials to facilitate informal trade			√	√		
Other issues relevant to understand ICBT at the national and specific BCP levels during the COVID-19 pandemic.	√	Recent publications				

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International Organization for Migration  
Walker Creek Office Park, 90 Florence Ribeiro Avenue, Muckleneuk  
Pretoria, 0181 South Africa  
Tel.: +27 12 342 2789 • Fax: +2712 342 0932  
Email: [angandu@iom.int](mailto:angandu@iom.int) • Website: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)