Reduce trucks empty trips to decrease GHG emissions

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In the latest years, many African corridor management authorities became increasingly sensitive to the environmental problems arising from the fast development of trade and freight transport, with some of them actively engaged in programmes aimed at turning their corridor infrastructure into environmentally friendly transport routes. Among them, the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA), in its last Strategic Plan (2017-2021), commits to address social and economic dimensions in the transport logistics chain including environmental and social health issues. To this purpose, the NCTTCA adopted in 2016 a North ern Corridor Green Freight Programme , a plan aimed at implementing a comprehensive Sustainable Freight Transport Strategy for 2030 and beyond.

A similar strategy is being pursued by the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA), that in collaboration with the NCTTCA and TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) drafted a study on the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions in Central and Northern Corridors aimed at quantifying GHG emissions along the main corridor routes and explore some climate change mitigation projects to be prioritized in an effort to reduce such emissions in both corridors.

The study proposes reduction of GHG emissions intensity by 20% and 15 % by 2030 for the Central and Northern Corridors respectively. In order to achieve this goal, countries crossed by the two corridors are urged to encourage the shifting from road to more environmental-friendly modes of transport (e.g. railways and waterways), and to reduce empty trips of trucks. Empty trips, apart from increasing transport costs, generate an environmental cost without any economic advantage, as trucks consume fuel without carrying out any cargo.

An interesting data emerging from the study is that in both corridors, exports represent only 14% of the total commercial vehicle movements, resulting in nearly 70% of trucks travelling empty in the direction of seaports. The report recommends, among others, the adoption of truck aggregator models. Initiatives aimed at reducing empty trips are becoming rapidly popular in Africa. Last year, TAI+ , an UBER-like e-marketplace platform accessible via a mobile app was launched in Kenya. Other platforms that aggregate demand and offer of truck services is Lory Systems , available in Kenya and Uganda, and Kobo360 , in Nigeria.