

Ease of moving goods is critical in the choices of transport companies. And in Africa, the shorter road is not always the less expensive road. This [video](#) from the [Brenthurst Foundation](#) documents the case of a shipment of copper cathodes via road from Solwezi, in Zambia, provincial capital of the mineral-rich North-Western Province, to the port of Walvis Bay, in Namibia, for a total distance of about 2,300 Km. It describes the challenges, and the costs of moving a 34-tonnes load along the poor roads connecting the Zambian mining centre to the Namibian port, including the “soft infrastructure” costs, i.e.; costs associated to crossing borders and waiting time at the port during which the truck remains idle awaiting a return cargo to transport back to Zambia.

The one-week trip to the Walvis Bay port attracts costs that are on average of 130 USD per tonne. Transporting the same cargo to Dar es Salam port, in Tanzania, would cost 150 to 170 USD per tonne and a two weeks trip, despite the road is about 200 Km. shorter.

But the road is not the only challenge. Long queues and waiting time at the border post (Kazumbaleza), which can take up to 3 days, due to delays sometimes deliberately created by border officials to feed the “economy of delays”, cause extra costs to the transport company for 350 USD per day. Plus, there is the waiting time at the port to find a return cargo (other 3 days at the cost of additional 350 USD each).