

There are no translations available.

Two [Time Release Studies](#) (TRS) have been recently conducted at the Nakonde One Stop Border Post (OSBP) and the Mwami Border Post in Zambia to measure average clearing times of trucks at these borders. Launched on 3rd November 2022 with the support of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the European Union, the studies were conducted by a Technical Working Group made up of Customs and other cross border regulatory agencies, truck drivers and small-scale traders at both border crossing points.

Time Release Studies (TRS) are a trade facilitation tool used to quantify the average times taken for the clearance of goods at the various entry locations in a certain country (e.g. ports, airports and land borders), even though their conduction at regional or at corridor-level is becoming more and more frequent, [especially in Africa](#)

. TRS aim at measuring the time required from the arrival of goods to their release, in an attempt to identify bottlenecks, delays and constraints in the clearance process, so that implementing corrective actions can be implemented for improving its efficiency.

TRS are recommended by [WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement \(TFA\)](#) , whose article 7.6 encourages members to periodically measure and make available to all relevant stakeholders (publication) the average release time of goods. To guide countries in their development, the World Customs Organization had developed the [WCO TRS Guidelines](#)

The TRS for the Nakonde/Mwami OSBP reveals that clearing time of trucks at Nakonde border post ranges between a minimum of one hour and 26 minutes and a maximum of 5 days 7 hours and 20 minutes. The average truck clearance period is one day and 15 hours from the time of arrival to the time of departure from the common control zone (a shared space within the OSBP where border officers of the adjoining countries are entitled to apply their respective national laws).

For the Mwami border post, the study finds that the minimum time for clearance of a truck is 22 minutes with a maximum delay time of 2 days 23 hours and 42 minutes. The average clearance time is 2 hours and 20 minutes.

These TRSs are not the first ones conducted by Zambia. In December 2019, a [Time Release Study \(TRS\) for the Chirundu OSBP](#)

was developed in the country. In 2021, a Zambia 'Time Release Study Plus' report was conducted by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on behalf of the Zambia National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC).

The new TRS adopted in Zambia have the same characteristic. Differently from "traditional" TRS, TRS "plus" adopt an extended approach to the measurement of bottlenecks, as they take into account also the delays caused by other regulatory agencies with responsibility for cross-border trade other than Customs. Developed by the World Bank, TRS+ methodology assesses the average times taken for the clearance of goods by measuring also the impact of regulatory processes that are carried out "away from the border" (ex. time for obtaining licences and permits) of competence of other government agencies. TRS+ therefore are aimed not only to improve Customs processing times, as they include specific recommendations also on process changes needed to enhance the performance of other border agencies that because of these features, are usually used as a basis for planning the implementation of trade facilitation reforms in the countries where they are carried out. One of the first TRS+ was adopted in [Eswatini](#).