



# **Presentation on the Inter-State Road Transit Scheme in the Gambia**

# OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

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- ❖ ISRT Implementation
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    - ❖ National Trade Facilitation Committee
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# Vision

- We re-position as a centre of excellent services that is highly committed to servicing the needs of its membership. We continue to build effective partnerships that will bring about economic growth and enterprise. We continue to be relevant to, responsive to, and be representative of the business community at large.

# MISSION

- The GCCI is here to make doing business easier. This means that as the voice of commerce in the community, we will advocate and also (or partner with) government to act on issues of concern to our members. We will use our knowledge, support and influence to pursue and promote pro-growth and trade policy initiatives.

# ❖ Introduction

- The Government of the Gambia launched the Inter-state road transit scheme (ISRT) in 2008 and formally designated the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) as the National Guarantor responsible for Implementing the scheme. Implementation started in July 2013.
- The main purpose of the scheme is to safeguard goods from point of loading to their destination, free from harassment, delay and deviation into another territory.

# Introduction Cont...

- As the scope of our Guarantor mandate is very limiting due to low guarantee levy charges, GCCI relies on the support and cooperation of the National Trade facilitation Committee to effectively administer the operations of the scheme.
- Guidelines have been developed and adopted by the trade facilitation Committee for effective administration.

# National Trade Facilitation Committee

- A National Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) was established by MOTIE to design a Mechanism to assess progress in implementation of the ECOWAS protocols in the Member States, particularly the ISRT. The responsibilities of this committee are:
  - To assess whether the Member States effectively propagate laws adopting the ISRT protocol and whether those laws and regulations are easily accessible by the member states;

# National Trade Facilitation

- To measure the level of implementation of ISRT protocol by the government agencies tasked with day-to-day implementation, both at the Port of entry and at border posts which administer goods being transported into and through each country; and
- To identify the areas that have the greatest impact on the competitiveness of transit goods



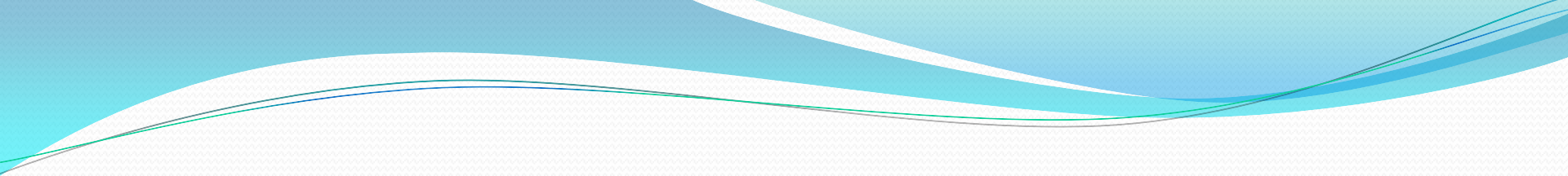
# ***GCCI Transit Operations***

GCCI and the committee also developed several features for a well-functioning transit scheme, in line with the ECOWAS ISRT Protocol:

- A sealing system for consignments to ensure that trucks undertake transit journeys without discharging cargo inside the country and throughout the journey
- Guarantee levy and a Bond to ensure that customs could recover loss of duties if transit goods were discharged and sold in the Gambia.

# ***GCCI's* Transit Operations**

- Ongoing sensitization of all agents participating in transit trade including Transport Owners and Clearing Agents
- Documentation system is in place comprising, log book, vehicle registration, ISRT plates issued at the start of each transit journey
- GCCI is responsible for sealing transit consignments to prevent goods from being removed or added to trucks.

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- Customs officers, Police and other supporting agencies supervise the sealing of trucks at the beginning of every journey based on ECOWAS ISRT procedures.

# Challenges

- Inefficient border procedures and duplicate processes at each border, are also likely to lead to poor competitiveness and make the Scheme involved less attractive to investors.
- Lack of initiative for taking action to improve the efficiency of border procedures because limited control of the border by national stakeholders such as GCCI, MOTIE , GNTCA, GRA and GPA.
- GCCI experience a very low level of usage of the ISRT Logbook by our counterparts, and stated that the ISRT Logbook is not yet valid in their country.

# Challenges Cont...

- Despite the non-payment of duties and tax on transit goods, we must carry out reforms in this area to achieve a substantial increase in Customer volume. This will lead to the processing of more goods and improve control of fraud, thus increasing government revenue.
  - For example, If a truck waits at the border for a week, ultimately the customer is paying for an extra cost for extensive border delays.

# Recommendations and Way Forward

- To ensure smooth implementation of the scheme and also effective administrative procedures and awareness creation, the Committee and the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE) must take note of the following:
  - A real time location system that can provide secure tracking information of vehicles on transit as they pass through the country.
  - Speedy movement is necessary since no tax, tariff and fee is paid for these goods.



- A rational database system for the purpose of managing data to prepare monthly and quarterly report to review ISRT policies and procedures to:
  - i) better understand and document best practices,
  - ii) to provide government and transit agencies with the information discovered, and
  - iii) to explore the potential need for an alternative approach to improve the ISRT structure, inspection policy and practice.

# Way Forward conti...

- A database system in place to serve as an initial step in the process within the larger context of a growing interest to assure the general public that the ISRT is safe and efficient.



# Way Forward conti...

- An electronic weigh bridge for at GPA
- Engaging Authorities in the sub-region, particularly Mali, Senegal, Bissau and Guinea Conakry, could strengthen the scheme and reduce misunderstandings that may arise due to lack of awareness

# Way Forward conti...

- Improvement in competitiveness, the need to meet ISRT's new objectives, and improve on efficiency, can be attained by upgrading the system. It is necessary to solve operating problems and adapt to appropriate new technologies and to introduce innovations into ISRT scheme. The GCCI is actively working on an automated tracking system with developers, with possibly support from MOTIE, to ensure achievement.



**The End**