

THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

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ABSTRACT

The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) was established in terms of Section 3 of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) Act, 1999 and commenced with the preparation of a Business Plan and Strategy for its operationalization in April 2005. The Corporation is established at its own offices located in Centurion, Tshwane since August 2005. Officials were seconded from the Department of Transport to assist in the setting-up phase and new positions were created and officials appointed according to the personnel structure and financial model of the RTMC.

The RTMC operates at arm's length from the Department and facilitates an effective partnership between national, provincial and local spheres of government in the management of road traffic matters.

The overriding aim of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) is to overcome the current fragmentation of traffic management functions across hundreds of provincial and local jurisdictions, and to bring a new professional coherence and improved morale into the entire system.

The branding and logo of the RTMC reflects the spirit of the objectives in as far as it represents a road with the two lanes and centre line featuring an element of an arrow in design: creating a sense of moving forward into the future. The lines coming together hint at the value of working together and channelling energy and resources towards one goal. The choice of colours with blue and green represent the environment and growth. The rectangular borders represent proper road traffic guidance and road safety.

The RTMC successfully established a culture of co-operation amongst parties involved in law enforcement and road safety promotions activities as well as traffic official training. In the main technical committees have now been set up and will continue to have intensive engagement responding to various challenges in road traffic management issues.

Looking at the statistics, the ever increasing number of registered vehicles and number of drivers poses a challenge on how to improve the road traffic management and provide a better service to the public. The growth of the vehicle and driver populations on the roads should be taken into consideration when observing the increasing number of crashes on the road. Surveys done on pedestrian jay-walking indicates that pedestrian fatalities pose a major challenge for the Corporation and its partners.

It is with these challenges in mind that the need for harmonization of traffic related issues in the country becomes paramount

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the Act provides for ten (10) functional areas, in the interim five (5) functional areas have been established in the RTMC, as agreed to by the Shareholders Committee. These 5 functional areas or units are:

- Training of traffic personnel;
- Road traffic information;
- Accident investigations and recording thereof;
- Communication and education; and
- Infrastructure safety audits.

The additional 5 functional units that will be created at a later stage on a convenient date which will be decided on by the Shareholders Committee, will be the following:

- Road traffic law enforcement;
- Vehicle registration and licencing;
- Vehicle and roadworthiness testing;
- Testing and licencing of drivers; and
- Administrative adjudication of road traffic offences (AARTO).

2. PURPOSE OF THE RTMC

Recognizing the importance of the regulation of public transport and road traffic to the development, safety and quality of life of all South Africans, the purpose for which the RTMC was established is:

- To enhance the overall quality of road traffic management and service provision;
- To strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the national, provincial and local spheres of government in the management of road traffic;
- To maximize the effectiveness of provincial and local government efforts, particularly in road traffic law enforcement;
- To create business opportunities, particularly for the previously disadvantaged sectors, to supplement public sector capacity;
- To guide and sustain the expansion of private sector investment in road traffic management.

3. THE MISSION, VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 Mission

To provide, in the public interest, for co-operative and coordinated strategic planning, regulation, facilitation and law enforcement in respect of road traffic matters by the national, provincial and local spheres of government; to regulate the contracting out of road traffic services and to provide for the phasing in of private investment in road traffic.

3.2 Vision

To overcome the fragmentation of traffic management functions across hundreds of different national, provincial and local authorities and institutions and to bring a new professional coherence and morale into the entire road traffic system with a view towards greatly improved law compliance and a reduction in road traffic accidents.

3.3 Strategic Objectives

The Road Traffic Management Corporation was established as a partnership between national, provincial and local spheres of government by:

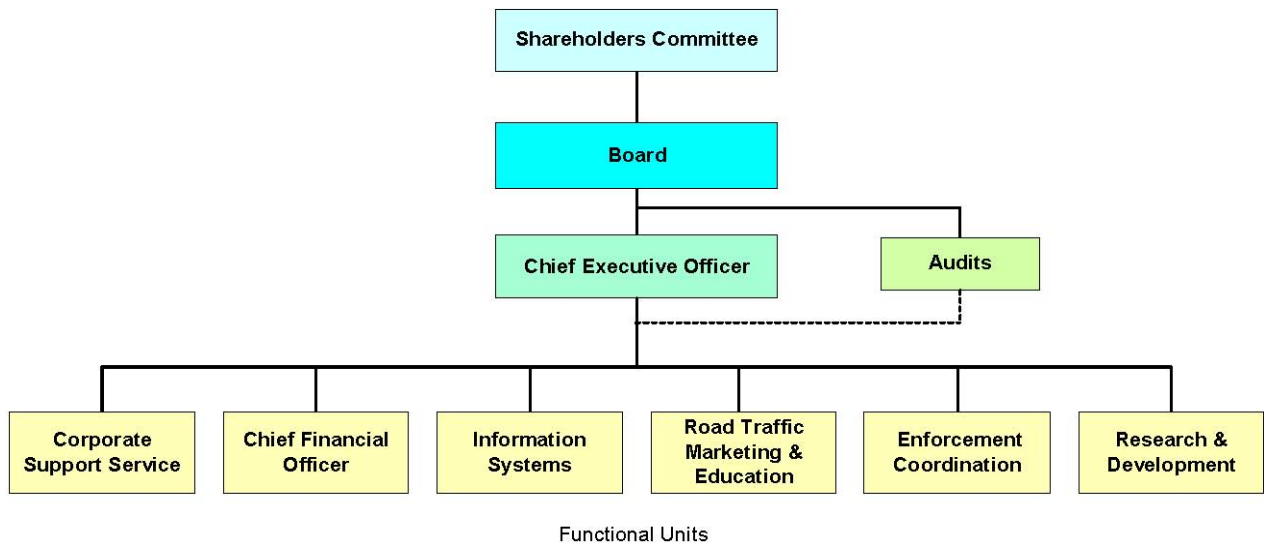
- effecting the pooling of road traffic powers of the Minister and every MEC and the resources of national and provincial spheres of government responsible for road traffic management, in support of enhanced co-operative and co-ordinated road traffic strategic planning, regulation, facilitation and law enforcement;
- strengthening national and provincial governments' collective capacity to govern road traffic through partnerships with local government bodies and the private sector; and
- focussing government on effective strategic planning, regulation, facilitation and monitoring.

The RTMC's further objectives are:

- to enhance the overall quality of road traffic service provision and, in particular, to ensure safety, security, order, discipline and mobility on the roads
- to protect road infrastructure and the environment through the adoption of innovative practices and implementation of innovative technology
- to phase out, where appropriate, public funding and phase in private sector investment in road traffic on a competitive basis
- to introduce commercial management principles to inform and guide road traffic governance and decision-making in the interest of enhanced service provision
- to optimise the utilisation of public funds by:
 - limiting investment of public funds to road traffic services which meet a social or non-commercial strategic objective and which have poor potential to generate a reasonable rate of return; and
 - securing, where appropriate, full cost recovery on the basis of the user-pays principle
- to regulate, strengthen and monitor intergovernmental contact and cooperation in road traffic matters
- to improve the exchange and dissemination of information on road traffic matters
- to stimulate research in road traffic matters and effectively utilise the resources of existing institutes and research bodies
- to develop human resources in the public and private sectors that are involved in road traffic.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In order to accommodate the initial functional units to be established in terms of the decision of the Shareholders Committee, an interim structure for the RTMC was developed.



4.1 The Shareholders Committee of the RTMC

The members of the Shareholders Committee are the following persons:

- The Minister of Transport
- Every MEC who is responsible for matters connected with road traffic in each province
- Two representatives nominated by the national organisation recognised in terms of section 2(a) of the Organised Local Government Act, 1997 (Act No. 52 of 1997).

4.2 Role of the Shareholders Committee

The Shareholders Committee is a forum through which the national, provincial and local spheres of government co-operate with each other and with other persons or bodies concerned with road traffic matters.

The Committee is responsible for directing and guiding the proper functioning of the Corporation in the public interest and for reflecting, in its decision-making procedures, the spirit of co-operation and mutual trust contemplated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

4.3 The Board of the RTMC

The Shareholders' Committee has established a Board comprising of the Chief Executive Officer and nine members who come from the private and public sector with proven expertise and competency in the field of corporate management, labour relations, commerce, commercial banking, financing and road traffic affairs.

The Board provides direction and leadership to the CEO and management of the corporation. The Board considers and approves the strategic plans, business plans, budgets, financial statements, annual reports of the corporation.

It also oversees the outputs of the corporation through various committees of the board including:

- audit committee
- risk management committee
- remuneration committee
- governance committee
- finance committee
- procurement committee

The board ensures that the corporation aligns its focus with national road safety objectives and employs its resources to attain those objectives effectively, efficiently and professionally.

4.4 The functions of the RTMC

- Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Purpose:

To develop a business model for road traffic management and manage corporate governance issues

Functions:

Provide strategic leadership for the organisation.

Provide overall management of the functional units.

Manage stakeholder relations.

Manage the undertaking of financial audits into the income and expenditure of the corporation.

- Corporate Support Service:

Purpose:

To coordinate and render an effective and efficient legal, administrative and corporate support service; as well as managing corporate governance issues

Functions:

Provide an organisational development strategy.

Provide a legal service to the corporation.

Manage corporate communication and stakeholder relations.

Manage resources of the corporation effectively.

Manage internal capacity development.

Provide an effective internal information technology service.

- Chief Financial Officer:

Purpose:

To provide sound financial administrative and supply chain management services

Functions:

Provide effective financial management to the corporation.

Provide an internal financial control service.

Provide a financial administrative service.

Provide a supply chain management service and control corporate assets.

Prepare financial reporting and budgeting service.

- Functional Unit : Information Systems

Purpose:

To provide and manage efficient road traffic information systems

Functions:

Provide a master traffic information system strategy for the corporation

Provide and manage effective and efficient internal road traffic information systems and centers.

Manage road traffic information systems and driver documentation contracts of the corporation.

Provide an effective business analysis service for the development and management of internal and external information systems.

- **Functional Unit : Road Traffic Marketing and Education:**
 Purpose:
 To provide and promote road traffic safety marketing programmes and a road safety education strategy
 Functions:
 Provide a road traffic marketing and education support service for the corporation.
 Develop, promote and manage road traffic marketing programmes and projects.
 Develop, promote and manage school, community and adult road safety education programmes and projects.

- **Functional Unit : Enforcement Coordination:**
 Purpose:
 To develop and promote efficient and coordinated programmes and projects for training of traffic officials and law enforcement operations
 Functions:
 Provide an overall enforcement training and coordination service.
 Develop, manage and monitor training programmes for traffic officials.
 Set standards and monitor compliance of training institutions for traffic officials.
 Set standards and promote coordinated and efficient traffic law enforcement operations, programmes and projects.

- **Functional Unit : Research and Development:**
 Purpose:
 To monitor rates and trends in road traffic activities and achievement of goals of the corporation and promote use of technology
 Functions:
 Provide and manage research and development projects in support of the functions of the corporation.
 Evaluating the impact of corporate programmes and projects on road safety and traffic offence rates.
 Measuring the achievement of strategic objectives relating to quality in road traffic.
 Promote the development and utilisation of technology in traffic management and control.

5. CURRENT FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

- Rolling Enforcement Plan (REP): Designed to harmonize road traffic enforcement operations nationwide;
- Establishment of the Patrol Car Project: High visibility enforcement operations in hazardous locations;
- Establishment of the Special Patrol Unit: High impact, special operations by highly trained officers in specially equipped vehicles;
- Development of the Enforcement Code: For uniform execution of road traffic management in the country;
- Establishment of a national Training Academy: Manage and co-ordinate effective and efficient training for traffic officials;
- Development of a National Public Transport Enforcement Strategy: Give effect to Taxi Re-cap process;

- Undertaking of Offence Surveys: Report on the levels of lawlessness in the country among all road users;
- Management of the National Fatal Crash Information Centre: Provision of comprehensive and up-to-date data on road traffic crashes;
- Undertaking of Special Accident Investigations: Detailed crash reports on certain serious crashes containing all possible contributory causes;
- Management of the National Traffic Call Centre: A 24 hour centre where road traffic behaviour can be reported.
- Development of a Multi-Media Road Safety Education Programme: A comprehensive road safety school programme for three phases;
- Management of the Driver of the Year Competition: Annual competition for drivers of heavy goods and large passenger vehicles;
- Management of Scholar Patrol Project: Provision of material and training for thousands of scholar patrols around the country;
- Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences (AARTO); Encourage payment of fines, reduce case loads at courts and improve road safety compliance.

6. CHALLENGES:

- Lack of capacity: the Corporation needs more people to assist with attaining its objectives; also, highly trained officials are needed to deal with the more specialized tasks.
- Lack of funding: a universal problem that could prove to be detrimental if funding is seen as leveraging influence.
- Political support: projects could suffer if there is little or no support from political principals.
- Failure to align prerogatives: could result in mixed messages being sent out leading to fragmentation.
- Poor morale: could stifle progress and productivity

7. CONCLUSION

The Road Traffic Management Corporation is poised to enter a new era in effective and efficient road traffic management in South Africa in order to ensure a better quality of life for all especially the most vulnerable road user. The cost of road trauma is inordinately high and the cost of pain and suffering is incalculable. The time for decisive and strong deliverables is long overdue. Together with its partners and stakeholders at all three tiers of government as well as the co-operation of the private and civil sectors, the Road Traffic Management Corporation will discharge its mandate through consultation, co-ordination and co-operation.

8. REFERENCES:

- [1] Department of Transport, 2005, Strategic Plan for the Establishment and Operationalization of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC)
- [2] SA Government, 1999, Road Traffic Management Corporation Act.
- [3] Road Traffic Management Corporation Annual Report, 2005/06.