

# Swazi haulier keen to grow cross-border business

By James Hall

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The northeastern Mananga Border Post, Swaziland's gateway to Mpumalanga's hot eastern lowveld, used primarily for traffic to and from Nelspruit, is an increasingly important transport location. Testifying to increased border post use that has seen a proliferation of shops and truck services on the Swazi side (the SA side remains undeveloped), a major road freight company, HS Transport, will soon relocate there.

Presently, HS Transport works out of Eshaneini, the centre of Swaziland's citrus industry. For shippers who think the large Swazi cargo transport firms can only be found in Mbabane and Matsapha, HS (for 'Herman and Sons') Transport has been servicing major clients for a decade.

Starting operations in Mhlume in the heart of the sugar-growing region, the

firm still hauls sugar-based products like molasses for the sugar estates as well as soft drink concentrates to Durban.

"We don't do much cross-border, but we'd like to do more of that. Four of our vehicles are long-distance trucks. The rest are all sizes, because we deal mostly in breakbulk," said company founder and director Herman Vilakazi.

A solid reputation earned from a decade of delivering goods has secured long-standing business commitments. "We tend to work on a contract basis, which works in our favour because we are not going up and down looking for business," said Vilakazi.

But more business would be welcome to boost the shipping slow season.

"It's the same all over Swaziland – business is up from October to the end of the year, and then it's quiet until April," Vilakazi said.