

# Dar Rapid Transit Agency reopens second BRT tender

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The Dar Rapid Transit Agency (Dart) in Tanzania has renewed its the search for the second operator on the bus rapid transit (BRT) system after initially failing to find an investor.



This comes even as overcrowding at Dart terminals and stations has worsened due to a shortage of buses on BRT routes.

Dart CEO, Ronald Lwakatare, told *The Citizen* in an exclusive interview that the agency floated the tender again earlier this month after applicants in the first tender failed to qualify.

## Re-advertised tender

"We have re-advertised the tender in order to get the right candidate. It is an open, international tender in which both local and foreign investors can apply. We have already received bids from several prospective investors," he said.

The second investor will join Usafiri Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit Company (Udart), which operates on BRT routes from Mbezi and Kimara to Kivukoni, Gerezani and Morocco.

Dart serves both as the regulator and owner of the BRT infrastructure.

The second operator will be expected to put in service at least 165 buses to increase operational efficiency and enable Dart to extend feeder routes.

## Plans to extend feeder routes

Lwakatare said there were plans to extend feeder routes to Kawe, Mwenge, University of Dar es Salaam, Sinza and Mabibo.

The first bidding round hit a snag after Udart went to court in January, this year, to block the process, claiming it had exclusive rights to operate rapid transit buses in the city.

However, Lwakatare said the court lifted the injunction, paving the way for the relaunch of the tendering process.

The initial tendering process was first advertised in June 2016 and the deadline was in August of the same year.

The search was for a service provider who would supply, operate and maintain an additional 138 buses (18 metres long for trunk operations) and 27 buses (12 metres long for feeder operations) on the BRT system on a 12-year contract. Udart was given a two-year contract, which is to be extended upon satisfactory performance.

The apparent shortage of buses facing the current operator has led to commuter congestion at Dart terminals and stations, especially during rush hour as established by a survey by *The Citizen*.

## Concerns

Surface Marine Transport Regulatory Authority (Sumatra) director general, Gilliard Ngewe, said he was concerned by the congestion and had already contacted Dart.

"We have had talks with Dart on the issue of shortage of buses. However, I'm aware that the process of seeking another service provider to increase efficiency has started," he said.

Udart head of communications, Deus Bugaywa, rejected the suggestion that congestion was caused by a shortage of buses, saying it was nothing unusual at rush hour when people commuted to and from work.

"It is only at peak hours when buses operated at full capacity. This is not the case during other times of the day," Bugaywa said. He added that Udart had about 140 buses operating on a regular basis.

"We are working hard to ensure that all buses are in good condition. We also have in place a good monitoring system that enables us to quickly replace buses that break down to avoid inconveniencing commuters."

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