

## POTHoles IN ZIMBABWE: A HINDRANCE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the effects of potholes on economic development in Zimbabwe with a view to recommend practical strategies that can be put in place to deal with the problem. Using the qualitative research methodology, the study benefited from face to face interviews from twelve (12) key stakeholders from the following key sectors of the economy; tourism, transport, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, insurance and mining that were selected through purposive sampling. The researcher also interviewed two (2) road engineers from the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development, and in addition secondary data was necessary as evidence to prove that indeed potholes are in existence in Zimbabwe. The study focused on two main roads; the Beitbridge-Chirundu road, the Harare-Beitbridge -Victoria Falls road. These roads connect with Zambia and South Africa respectively and both are Zimbabwe's main trading partners. Findings indicate that these roads are infested with potholes, a situation that has affected economic growth in Zimbabwe. Tourists and haulage trucks from neighbouring countries cannot drive through potholes, vehicles are depreciating at a faster rate and transporters are losing a lot of money through vehicle maintenance. Goods meant for production are being delayed, with some being lost through accidents. Insurance pothole accident related claims have increased and this entails hindrance of economic development in Zimbabwe. The study recommends government to consider developing a consistent approach for determining economic costs and benefits of highway maintenance. The government should also consider an appropriate measure of reporting potholes which is informative of an efficient approach of road maintenance. The government should put in place a sound system of tracking roads which are aging and prioritize them for preventive maintenance.

**Keywords:** Economic Development, Potholes, Road, Transportation.