



BUSINESS SECTOR STORIES

TRANSPARENT BALLOT BOXES FOR KENYAN VOTERS

Voters in the recent Kenyan referendum on the constitution were able to use ballot boxes that had been manufactured in Kenya. And in the interests of transparency and good governance the boxes were themselves transparent. Made of clear plastic they were the result of a collaboration between Kenyan Complast Industries and the Danish DCS Group that was match-made by the Royal Danish Embassy's B2B business to business programme, which offers funding for on the ground collaboration between Danish and Kenyan enterprises.

Essential to this match-making role is putting together collaborations that are mutually beneficial. The Kenyan companies gain access to Danish technology, know-how and the opportunity to participate in the international business agenda. The Danish companies get access to new markets, products and production opportunities. The overall objective of B2B is the reduction of poverty through the promotion of economic growth and private sector development in developing countries by either creating employment or saving jobs in the local countries. This collaboration did all that and more.

BUSINESS COLLABORATION

The collaboration between Complast and DCS involved two-way training and technology transfer and it is hoped that the resulting



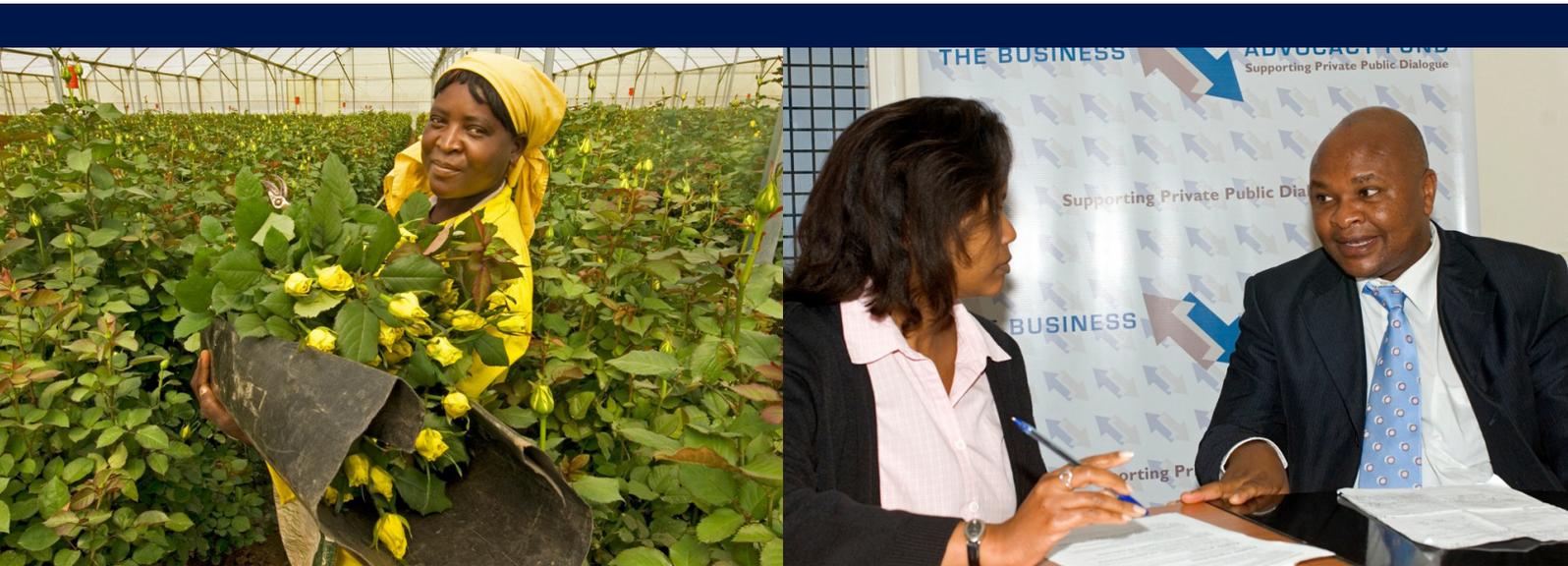
A Complast/DCS ballot box

60 litre ballot boxes will be exported and used in future elections all over the world. New plastic moulding machines were bought to make the boxes and a further 20 people employed in their manufacture. In compliance with Danish working practises new welfare facilities were built at Complast, including ladies toilets and a staff canteen.

The project was successful merely as a business proposition but at the same time also combined private sector development and good governance - particularly in the election process. The ballot boxes reduce

the chances of election fraud by being completely secure and see-through – a matter of particular concern following the 2008 violence triggered after Kenya's last elections.

Through the transfer of technology and expertise the B2B programme has succeeded in creating an enabling environment for the Kenyan private sector to enhance economic growth, it has introduced good environmental practises to the country and encouraged corporate social responsibility – all with one transparent ballot box.



Danida interventions create jobs for women across Kenya

Dr. Stephen Mbithi the managing director, Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, and Ruth Gathee of the Business Advocacy Fund

SUCCESS STORY: THE BUSINESS ADVOCACY FUND

Reduction of poverty depends critically on economic growth and economic growth depends on a good business environment in which people have the freedom to start and grow businesses and the ability to trade widely. The Danish embassy’s business sector department has been working hard to encourage more people to start businesses, creating more jobs and making Kenya an interesting country to invest in both for domestic and international investors.

In recent years the Kenyan business environment has come to be considered too highly regulated. This combined with often rampant corruption has meant that investor confidence and business competitiveness have been undermined. To combat this and to promote dialogue between business and the government, Danida has been supporting The Business Advocacy Fund (BAF) as part of its DKK 155 million Business Sector Programme Support (BSPS).

BAF was designed to support the restoration of public private dialogue between the

private sector and government. As such, it would also encourage fair labour laws for men and women and help bring about an “enabling environment” for business growth. The inclusion of the private sector is paramount to the design of better public policy and business regulation as the needs of business are best understood by business itself. In 2008, BAF intervention resulted in 92 new dialogues commencing between the private and public sectors. In 2009, this number had increased to 113. The evidence from BAF’s support of advocacy by business associations is that the strategy is working. Over 50 advocacy projects by nearly 40 business associations countrywide has already yielded nearly 50 policy “wins”. Many more are expected as a result of ongoing dialogues.

NEW MOMENTUM

The Business Advocacy Fund has created a momentum and new mechanisms for positive change to the business climate. There is, of course, much more to achieve but the private sector is now more involved in policy formulation than before.

William Lay, the Chairman of the Business Advocacy Fund says: “The Business Advocacy Fund is now recognized as a positive force supporting change in business regulation in Kenya. It is important that the Fund expands the range of its support so that this momentum becomes unstoppable and sustainable. The support of Danida and the commitment of the Government of Kenya is deeply appreciated.”

In 2009 and 2010 the BAF has concentrated on developing advocacy competence, as well as providing financial support to Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) towards the cost of engaging in dialogue and advocacy. The BAF now offers a range of training courses and written materials intended to develop the competence of the staff and board of BMOs. BMOs learn through experience, but they can learn faster with external support, which is why BAF devotes a large proportion of its budget to this work.

Danish funding to the BAF has already yielded results for horticulture workers and the success of BMOs in lobbying the government leads to more being set up every month.