

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC PRIVATE DIALOGUE IN ZIMBABWE

NECF Launches the Public Private Dialogue Manual to Government and Private Sector

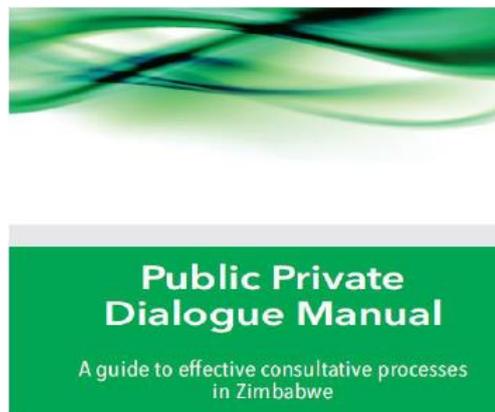
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Building Successful Partnerships

Since the beginning of 2014, National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) has been implementing various programs in an effort to reposition itself as a convener of Public Private Dialogues. With assistance from Zimbisa, NECF engaged a consultant to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis in 2014. This exercise assisted NECF to establish its current position, and acted as a springboard for the organisation to reposition itself better to be an effective convener of public private sector dialogues. Four economists were recruited in a way to ensure the NECF is structured towards fulfilling the results from the SWOT analysis among other changes made by the organisation.

Zimbisa assisted the NECF with an international consultant to help the organisation to develop the Public Private Dialogue Manual in order to standardise the consultation process in the country through wide consultation with stakeholders from both the Government and the Private sector. The PPD manual outlines all the necessary steps that have to be undertaken before and after the consultative process. The manual is used to generate consensus among stakeholders at conceptualisation and implementation of ZimASSET programs and other Zimbabwean developmental policies ensuring shared vision and inclusive growth.





The PPD manual was launched at a ceremony graced by the Chief Secretary to the Office of the President and cabinet Dr. Misheck Sibanda and his deputy Col (retired) C.M. Katsande on the 16th of July 2015. The Chief Secretary encouraged all Ministries, local authorities, Business Membership Organizations and other individual companies/organizations to use the PPD Manual as a toolkit for dialogue between the public and private sector.

Following the Chief Secretary to the Office of the President and Cabinet's encouragement for Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to utilise the manual in the policy making process during its launching ceremony, the OPC has requested the distribution of the PPD manual to Government Ministries, parliament and parastatals.

The Medical Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ) has become the first MDA that has requested training on the use of the manual from the NECF while IDBZ and CZI from the private sector have also requested the training.

Utilizing Zimbisa's advisory services has allowed the NECF to successfully test the PPD process on 4 successive dialogues, that is, the Agribusiness Conference in 2014, Fuel Prices Dialogue, International Business Conference and the SMEs Dialogue. With each successive dialogue, improvements were being made to ensure conformation with the PPD process and adjustments being made where necessary. During these dialogues NECF has made significant improvements in policy consultations which among others include inclusive agenda setting, balanced representations and post dialogue support through reform tracking tool.

Following these successes, in the recent months NECF has seen an improvement in its image and profile where a number of developmental partners are engaging with NECF in various partnerships. Recently the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) partnered with NECF on the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Public Private Dialogue. The USAID Strategic Economic Research and Analysis (SERA) program is working with NECF as well on an upcoming Labour Dialogue. Moreover, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the European Union (EU) are engaging NECF on possible areas of collaboration as the value of NECF is now largely being recognised.

THE NECF

The National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) was formed on 27 July 1997 after a series of at least 39 stakeholder consultative meetings between the private and public sectors, including academia and civil society. Motivated by the International Smart Partnership Dialogue held at Langkawi Island in Malaysia in July 1995 and the Malaysian experience, the NECF was mandated to facilitate dialogue and secure consensus among the Zimbabwean stakeholders (government, business, labour, academia and civil society) to achieve mutual prosperity through principles of ‘prosper thy neighbour’ and ‘win-win’ smart partnerships.

The NECF platform is meant to provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss key policy issues, bottlenecks in policy implementation and proposed solutions designed to grow and transform the Zimbabwean economy. The NECF motto: “Together we can make Zimbabwe great,” acknowledges that success of an economy lies in the stakeholders’ shared vision, clarity on their responsibility and accountabilities to the national vision.

Making Policy Reform in Zimbabwe Faster and Cheaper to Design and Implement.

The Zimbisa Government Component

The Zimbisa Government component has developed a number of tools that can help government identify areas for priority focus, in consultation with the private sector. The involvement of local stakeholders in policy formulation can significantly lower the costs and effort required by government in this process. Consultation also makes policy implementation and enforcement easier and more participative. With the objective of raising internal and foreign direct investment, government can also engage with investors and the private sector at large to determine the key areas where policy formulation can be improve.

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