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**Key to Developing Private Sector Partnerships**

**BIPP's perspective**

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## **Key to Developing Private Sector Partnerships**

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**by**

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Recognizing the increasingly important role of the private sector, not only for economic growth but also to help eradicate poverty, combat environmental degradation and strengthen political and social stability, there is a need for research and knowledge generating entities (KGEs) like BIPP to build partnerships with the private sector in that country.

For the purpose, these entities should target the local chambers and business community, particularly large, multinational corporations that stand to benefit from increased contact with, and recognition of KGEs diverse network of partners, including civil society and local governments.

Working through the Chambers of Industry, KGEs should persuade the business community to implement concrete development projects that are mutually beneficial for both the sponsors and the local community. For example, when Microsoft sponsored an IT peer education project in Africa, it increased its access to qualified workers as well as boosted the employment opportunities for those who undertook training.

The aim should be to develop and facilitate implementation of specific development projects that support the national commitment to SDGs as well as local development programs. Success will not be automatic, however. Meeting certain criteria helps increase the overall success of a project.

For example, private sector will be most willing to participate in and sponsor development projects when the projects aim at accomplishing the following:

- promote gender equality and empower women

- ensure environmental sustainability
- develop electronic communications
- eradicate poverty
- strengthen democratic governance through supporting local administration reform programme of the Government

These are indeed difficult issues for the private sector to tackle without expert help from non-government organizations like KGEs and other implementation partners which are set up for community project outreach and implementation and NGO network.

It also needs to be recognized that visibility and “speed to market” are two key factors to a successful partnership and project implementation. Coca-Cola and Microsoft, for example, contributed their expertise and financial resources globally to develop and implement a communications strategy to effectively inform the public about their community service projects and their impact. This increased visibility helps the corporations in the market relationship and as a means and model to implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR). Such visibility also opens doors for new partnerships with other private sector partners.

As for speed, it is important to invest the necessary human and financial resources to ensure a smooth and speedy project implementation and effective payment structures.

Key considerations which the KGEs and research institutions should pay heed to include:

- Establishing partnerships with the private sector based on activities around KGEs “core business”. Third party partnerships with government or ideally non-government agencies are very essential to complement our competencies for maximum effectiveness of the projects.
- Developing a network of partners (including civil society) as competitive advantage, as this is critical for project implementation and outreach. The existing community networks within the local governance and provincial development programs need to be harnessed for building new partnerships.

- Visibility is key to open doors for KGEs with the private sector partners interested in similar levels of partnership and visibility as part of their CSR efforts.
- Speed is also the key in formalizing projects with the private sector by investing the necessary human resources into project formulation.
- Realization within the private sector on KGEs capacity for the successful implementation of the relations with the authorities, stakeholders etc., for effective implementation of the upstream project activities. This requires an effective management structure to address the daily requests of the partnering company which may be at times highly demanding and time consuming.