

TELEPHONE: (267) 3710314
FAX: (267) 3710312



NATIONAL AIDS COORDINATING AGENCY
(NACA)
PRIVATE BAG 00463
GABORONE
BOTSWANA

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NACA MOVES TO STRENGTHEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN THE NATIONAL RESPONSE TO HIV AND AIDS

Preparations are at an advanced stage for the inaugural meeting between government and the private sector aimed at strengthening private sector participation in the national response to HIV and AIDS.

The National AIDS Coordinating Agency, (NACA) and partners will meet the private sector on **May 30th** to devise strategies to strengthen the sector engagement in the national response to HIV and AIDS towards achievement of national goal of ***zero new infections by 2016***.

THE NEED FOR STRONGER ENGAGEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In most developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the private sector is a key partner of the overall national response to HIV and AIDS in the entire planning process to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of quality service delivery.

However, the situation is different in Botswana where the involvement of the private sector in the response to HIV and AIDS has been limited to the implementation of a "minimum package" that advocated for condoms distributions, peer education, information dissemination as part of the workplace programs.

In developing countries in Africa, the bulk of the financing of AIDS treatment and care is currently coming from external sources, rather than the Government budget, however in Botswana the situation is the opposite as the government finances the bulk of the national response.

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As the major financier of the national response to HIV and AIDS, the government is under pressure to sustain the existing cohorts of people on anti-retroviral treatment.

There is need to elevate the private sector responsibility from an operational and programmatic level of workplace programmes to that of a strategic partner in the planning, mobilization of resources, development and oversight of the national response.

The private sector possesses great expertise and capacity in resource mobilization far much beyond any other sector in the HIV and AIDS arena and could supplement government efforts.

The private sector also has sound and solid financial management, project management skills and expertise as well as good models for achieving efficiency gains in service delivery, which have become critical areas of application in the national response to HIV and AIDS going forward.

The second National Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS 201-2016 highlights important roles and responsibilities for the private sector as follows;

- Mobilizing additional resources for financing of the national response, including research
- Applying private sector tools and techniques such as market segmentation to design and distribute appropriately targeted interventions.
- Supporting the national monitoring and evaluation system, and information sharing on best practices by adopting and adapting private sector tools and systems
- Undertaking mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS into internal and external domain of private sector enterprises and through partnerships and experience sharing in the public sector as well.
- Utilizing private sector products, logistical networks, and advertising channels to support implementation of HIV and AIDS initiatives
- Providing mentoring to other private sector companies and the informal sector, in terms of responding to the epidemic

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Should you require any additional information, do not hesitate to contact the Public Relations Office at 393 6249, 3710314 or lomongatane@gov.bw.

