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# Communications and the Media

**Communications and the Media**

If you get a grant from BEST-Dialogue, communication is vital to getting across facts and figures you have gathered and communicating your needs within your organisation and externally to through the media. BEST-Dialogue supports a broader vision for reform across the business community and encourages greater public debate on the importance of sustainable, private sector-led growth. We do this by working with the media, Members of Parliament, and in collaboration with private sector and civil society partners.

We offer communications and media support for those organisations receiving grants from BEST-Dialogue. We have a proven track record of setting the stage for business networking events endorsed by a majority of membership organisations.

Year on year the national media displays a greater understanding of the importance of fostering a positive business environment in Tanzania. The media provides appropriate coverage of advocacy issues, raised by private sector organisations, and the government’s response to these.

Essentially we encourage the media to produce well-researched and balanced newspaper articles, television and radio programmes, which debate the issues of doing business in Tanzania. The quality of media output, which we are always striving to improve, is measured annually in the Business Journalism Review.

**Media output**

BEST-Dialogue encourages the development of media markets in which business issues are discussed. This involves funding business-related radio programmes and newspaper sections or supplements. BEST-Dialogue also works with its partners to explore and pilot the use of social media to raise the general public’s awareness of business environment issues. From reports on research carried out by private sector organisations, the public gains an understanding of how these organisations are improving dialogue in the business environment.

**Training**

BEST-Dialogue provides support for the development of business journalism. It works with journalist training institutions and professional associations to help journalists develop an awareness of business issues and the importance of an enabling business environment for private sector-led development. Journalists have the opportunity to submit written and broadcast work to the Tanzania Media Council to compete for the *Excellence in Journalism Awards*.

We also support the establishment of training programmes that help business people and their representative organisations to write business stories for publication in local and national media.

**Business events**

We work with private sector organisations to organise business conferences and events that bring the business community together with other sectors of society to discuss business environment issues. Depending on the issues being addressed, these events are on a scale from national to local, and from general to sector-specific. Businesses gain by agreement on key strategies for future advocacy and dialogue, and by engagement with government on issues of concern.

**Support for organisations to work with Members of Parliament**

Specifically, BEST-Dialogue works with partner organisations to raise awareness among members of parliament on business environment issues. Private sector organisations already actively engage with Parliamentary sub-committees, mostly informally in the course of advocacy projects. A more structured approach can be made if organisations engage the Parliament Office directly to raise awareness of the business agenda. For example, currently there is an active move to have private sector and civil society organisations take part in local budget cycles.

**Election Business Agenda formulated and endorsed by a majority of apex or umbrella private sector organisations**

Prior to the General Election, BEST-Dialogue will work with its partner organisations to establish an agenda for business, which will be used to bring into national focus the problems facing the business community. After the elections, it is crucial that new parliamentarians are well briefed by private sector organisations in co-operation with the Parliament Office and Policy Forum.

**Communications and Media Project Officer**

This officer supports the development of initiatives with the media and of communications strategies among selected grantees. They are responsible for working with prospective organisations in the development of their funding proposals and the monitoring of funded activities.