

# Institutional arrangements for the private sector

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## STARZ in context

The [Strengthening the AIDS Response Zambia \(STARZ\)](#) programme provided technical support to NAC Zambia from May 2004 until August 2009. This has included support for improved participation of civil society and the private sector in the national multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS. The STARZ programme was funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), with technical assistance supplied by HLSP in partnership with JHU-CCP, HDA and PMTC(Z) Ltd.



Image: Workers at Kushiya Farm  
Mazabuka district, Southern Province

## Introduction

The defining characteristic of the national AIDS response in Zambia is its multisectoral structure, coordinated around a single National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC), a single national strategic framework, and a single monitoring mechanism. This presents each sector with the challenge of self-coordination: organising its response autonomously, while engaging constructively with the NAC and other sectors.

Throughout the five years of the STARZ programme, technical assistance and catalytic resources have been provided to develop the capacity for self-coordination in the private sector. The STARZ capacity development approach has included simultaneous support for individuals, institutions and the enabling environment; with the objective of sustainability and responsiveness of the private sector response to HIV and AIDS in Zambia beyond the lifetime of STARZ itself.

This paper outlines support provided to self-coordinating groups (SCGs) in the private sector, their engagement with the NAC, and their respective roles and responsibilities at national and sub-national levels.

## National Level

The institutional arrangements for the private sector are based on the operational structures for the implementation of the National AIDS Strategic Framework (NASF), which presents six themes to direct the national response to HIV and AIDS. Technical committees have been set up under each theme (Theme Groups), and these are responsible for ensuring smooth implementation of activities against the objectives and strategies outlined under their respective themes in the NASF.

In 2007, the NAC made great strides in clarifying private sector coordination arrangements to operationalise the NASF. The private sector already had established SCGs, and these are represented in various HIV forums such as the HIV Sector Advisory Group (SAG), and the Partnership Forum. These SCGs also contribute to national coordination efforts collectively as the Lower Business Forum (LBF). The coordination arrangements at national level are institutionalised at NAC.

### Six themes for the national private sector response to HIV and AIDS

- To prevent new HIV infections in employees and their family members.
- To improve access to and utilisation of treatment, care and support services for infected and affected employees and their families.
- To support employees and their families made vulnerable or affected by HIV.
- To sustain a comprehensive response to the epidemic at every level of the private sector.
- To monitor and evaluate workplace programmes (WPPs) effectively, and to use the information for decision making and to improve responses.
- To strengthen advocacy and coordination to create an enabling environment for all.

## Lower Business Forum

The LBF is the only private sector SCG meeting that is hosted by NAC. Representation is drawn from various SCGs including:

- Zambia Business Coalition on AIDS (ZBCA)
- Zambia Workplace AIDS Partnership (ZWAP)
- Global Development Alliance (GDA) companies
- Private Practitioners Association (PPA)
- Zambia Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI)
- Zambia Chambers of Small and Medium Business Associations (ZCSMBA)
- and, Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU).

Others SCGs are welcome to join the LBF once their capacity is developed to a sufficient standard to undertake AIDS work or to contribute to the HIV debate. The above mentioned SCGs meet collectively every two months at the LBF to debate and act on HIV and AIDS issues. In addition, special LBF meetings are called to take forward a specific issue, or to prepare for a national programme or event.

The LBF is not only concerned with WPPs, but is also responsible for advocacy and lobbying activities on behalf of the private sector. The LBF is chaired by the Executive Director of ZBCA, who is responsible for communication flows between the various HIV forums, and for coordination of activities arising from their meetings. In the event that the LBF fails to make any headway with a specific issue, it is obliged to inform the High Business Forum (HBF) and call its members to meet in order that the matters can be debated at a higher level with government officials.

The flow of communication upwards is ensured through LBF representation at NAC Theme Group meetings. The communication flow downwards is through quarterly consultative meetings held by Provincial AIDS Coordination Advisers (PACAs) and District AIDS Coordination Advisers (DACAs) at sub-national levels. The agenda for these meetings is set by the LBF, and feedback is provided through quarterly reports and meeting minutes. Sector issues can also be debated by SCGs in their individual forums, and NAC often uses this opportunity to include agenda items for feedback from ZWAP, for example, during its monthly partnership meetings.

## High Business Forum

The main purpose of the HBF is to provide a 'voice' for the private sector in government forums at ministerial level, and at other special meetings and events. Representation is drawn from the same SCGs as for the LBF, but members comprise Board Directors, who are employed by companies in a senior management capacity. A member of the HBF represents the private sector on the Country Coordinating Mechanism of the Global Fund (CCM).

The HBF is responsible for addressing policy issues and wider private sector concerns that may impinge on their inclination or ability to undertake AIDS work. This is a virtual group and has met only once. It can only be called by the LBF to take forward unresolved issues to a higher level. The HBF Chairperson is drawn from the HBF and is elected by its members.

## Key partners: Zambia Workplace AIDS Partnership and Zambia Business Coalition on AIDS

Both ZWAP and ZBCA are SCGs in their own right. ZWAP is mainly concerned with programme implementation, supporting a large portfolio of companies; whereas ZBCA is a membership association, and has a remit to support NAC in national private sector coordination efforts.

The nature of their work has presented these SCGs with opportunities to represent the private sector in Theme Groups, Thematic and LBF meetings. ZWAP/ZBCA representatives participate in the LBF to identify policy and other strategic issues which are subsequently communicated to the relevant Theme Group for action.

ZBCA coordinates ZWAP representation in Corresponding Theme Meetings, so that tasks and assignments relevant to implementers can be identified, delegated and undertaken by specific ZWAP members. Such assignments can also be identified by the Theme Group representative in attendance. ZWAP and ZBCA provide feedback on all meetings attended during their monthly ZWAP meetings. These reports will be consolidated by ZBCA and presented to the LBF, and HBF if necessary.

## Private sector coordination at sub-national level

During 2007, NAC focused its attention on strengthening the decentralised response, particularly for civil society and the private sector. Work began by designing a monitoring tool to assess the degree of engagement of the non-government sectors in provincial and district level activities. To achieve effective involvement of these sectors, NAC provided PACAs and DACAs with tools to undertake a mapping exercise to record the availability and location of HIV and AIDS services (both social and clinical) and sector partners within their catchment areas. For the private sector, this latter emphasised the need to identify LBF member SCGs at lower levels, such as ZACCI provincial office sites, District Business Associations, ZWAP office sites, Farmers Associations, and company sites.

## Conclusion

The private sector is a very diverse entity, embracing small and medium enterprises up to international corporations; contrasting operations including mining, agriculture, tourism and finance; numerous interest groups each with their own remits; a lively set of network and membership organisations working specifically in the field of HIV and AIDS; and a range of levels from local communities through districts and provinces to the national and international arenas.

The response of the STARZ programme has been to work through private sector SCGs and the NAC to identify areas of comparative advantage for each, and to bolster these while clarifying and strengthening the channels of communication for the private sector within the national AIDS response. The result is a complex web of relationships which address information education and communication needs, coordination efforts, monitoring capacity, advocacy functions, exchange of ideas, contribution to policy making, and representation on forums at all levels. This web has the capability of adjusting to the ever-changing demands placed upon it, just as the national response to AIDS adjusts as prevalence, prevention, treatment, care, policy, attitudes and funding conditions continue to evolve.

