



The SADC and German Delegation applaud the successful conclusion of the bilateral negotiations

Germany commits 20 million Euro for SADC development

Ernest Moli
BG reporter

Germany has made a new commitment of 20 Million Euro for technical and financial cooperation with the 15-member strong Southern African Development Community (SADC).

This came after the successful conclusion of negotiations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the SADC Secretariat last week 11th June 2021.

The money is for cooperation in the priority areas of Regional Economic Integration; Trans-boundary Water Management; Trans-boundary Natural Resource Management and Resilience to Climate Change as well as in the overarching area of Strengthening National-Regional Linkages (SNRL).

The bilateral negotiations were opened on the German side by German Ambassador to Botswana/SADC Margit Hellwig-Bötte and Günter Nooke, the German Chancellor's Special Representative for Africa who joined the proceedings. Head of Economic & Development Cooperation at the German Embassy in Gaborone, Marcel Grella told **Botswana Guardian** that the total amount since the last negotiations in 2019 committed by Germany to SADC now amounts to 29, 1 Million Euro. The SADC Delegation at the negotiations was headed by outgoing Executive Secretary Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax while the German Delegation was led by Alois Schneider, the Head of Division for Southern Africa and South Africa at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Some of the ongoing activities under the SADC-German Development Cooperation include fostering Regional Economic Integration. For example, the border posts of Tlokweng in Botswana, Livingstone (Zambia-Zimbabwe) and Kazungula (Zambia-Botswana) have been technically upgraded to facilitate trade.

Grella explained that starting from mid-2021, trucks passing these posts will be registered electronically. He said that truck drivers and their families will profit from faster COVID-19 tracing. The system will be further developed and improved in the scope of this project to include electronic management of customs papers thereby accelerating trade in the SADC region. There has also been COVID-19 Support as part of Support to Industrialisation and Productive Sectors under which 14 companies and research institutions in seven SADC countries receive more than 1.5 million USD financial support. Grella said these companies and institutions are using these funds to increase the production of medical/pharmaceutical products helping societies in SADC to cope with COVID-19. Products like face masks and oxygen supply systems become more effective, more widely available and more affordable.

Grella said that with the help of the support, it is estimated that an additional 5 million medical and FFP2 masks, 25,000 surgical gowns and 20 million litres of hand disinfectant can be produced per month, which will contribute to improving regional pandemic preparedness. German Development Cooperation also supports various

Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in the SADC Region through both Financial and Technical Cooperation among these, are the Lumbo-mbo TFCA, Malawi-Zambia TFCA, KAZA TFCA and Greater Limpopo TFCA. Citing a tangible example, Grella explained that joint efforts of the SADC-Secretariat and Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA)-Management Structures have greatly improved park administration, joint cross border law enforcement and anti-poaching operations in Malawi-Zambia TFCA.

He said that more than 4000 ranger patrols were conducted in the Malawi-Zambia TFCA leading to more than 2000 arrests of poachers by the respective authorities. This also led to the opening of judicial proceedings in more than 30 percent of those cases.

Moreover, to connect the Kasungu and Lukusuzi parks as part of Malawi-Zambia TFCA and allowing for animal movement, three corridors were established through seven Community Conservation Areas (CCA). This included that for a total area of 130,000 ha management plans were developed to also stop illegal settlement and deforestation. The development cooperation between Germany and SADC also contributes to the improvement of safe drinking and waste water disposal in Kazungula area between Zambia and Botswana. This involves construction of basic infrastructure, which includes preparation report, upgrade of Kazungula Water treatment plant, upgrade of the storage reservoir and upgrade of the distribution networks. German-SADC Development cooperation contributes to setting up a safe water supply between Mozambique and Eswatini in areas of Namaacha and Lomahasha, which is a cross-border water supply project. Grella said the project involves the upgrade of the Simunye Water Treatment Plant raw water supply system, installing pumping main to Lomahasha and Namaacha Reservoirs and provision of distribution networks at Lomahasha and Namaacha.

He said that once completed, these two projects will grant safe water access to 70, 000 people living in these areas. SADC Public Relations Manager confirmed the outcome of the negotiations adding that the Executive Secretary Dr Tax thanked Germany for displaying marks of "true friendship during the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic through the COVID-19 Response Support extended by Germany and the European Union to SADC. Dr Tax also appealed to Germany to continue supporting SADC efforts through priorities outlined in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and the SADC Vision 2050 in order to achieve the desired developmental impact to enhance the living standards of SADC citizens.

According to Lopi, Dr Tax encouraged Germany and other partners to continue working with, and through the RECs to push the continental integration agenda and to support the operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) together with the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA).

Negotiations between SADC and Germany are held every two years. The most recent round concluded in Berlin in June 2017 with a pledging of 47, 5 million euros for 2018 and 2019.

Pharmaceutical manufacturing project in the offing

Tlotlo Mbaz
BG reporter

Ensymm, a German Life Science Consultancy company, is working with a local medical supplies company, First Commerce to establish Botswana's first unique A to Z pharmaceutical manufacturing facility.

The brainchild of Dr. Pedram Dehdari, a German national, Ensymm owns a network of over 100 industry partners that service clients worldwide in life science consultancy especially in pharmaceuticals, medical, biotech, agriculture and food supplement fields.

Speaking to **Botswana Guardian**, Dr. Dehdari said six years ago, the company did a techno-financial feasibility study for the pharmaceutical project in Botswana.

However, it was only last year in June, that a local doctor, Dr. Boago Tapela, founder of First Commerce contacted them for the same project field, and they decided to refocus.

First Commerce is a local medical supplies company and Ensymm's local partner.

Dr. Dehdari who is the Managing Director at Ensymm, regards their plan as a national project as it will be the footprint of the pharmaceutical industry in the country. Once fully operational, the plant will produce for health care supply and consumption within Botswana and SADC in less than two years. They envisage that 50 percent of their production will be for domestic market and 50 percent for export in SADC and the rest of Africa. Dr. Tapela says the dream is to go into pharmaceutical manufacturing, because they have identified a gap. "What currently happens in Botswana is packaging and repackaging, and we want, through this manufacturing project, to start an A to Z process," Dr. Tapela says.

He explains that they looked around to see who could deliver a quality turnkey project, with right certifications, and investment as well. They looked into South Africa, which in his view, is not a bad place to start, but were inclined to the Germans because of their advanced technology, engineering, processes and quality. "I got in touch with Dr. Dehdari and started the conversation in June 2020, enquiring if Ensymm can manage a pharmaceutical project consultancy for Botswana". From there on, progress stalled and necessary travel could not be done because of COVID-19 restrictions. "We wanted him to travel here to get a feel of what it takes to set up a project of this magnitude locally". In addition, Dr. Tapela says their German counterparts had to appreciate the culture, manufacturing industry itself, as well as the supply logistics chain among other factors.

Dr. Tapela also shared with his German counterparts the economic landscape of the country.

"We are dependent on mining, tourism, we used to have Agriculture as one of the mainstays of the economy, however not anymore," Dr. Tapela says, adding that Botswana can no longer heavily depend on resources. Dr. Tapela therefore believes

that opportunities exist for investors to come into Botswana and set up especially in the manufacturing industry. In his view, manufacturing has a larger value chain in terms of job creation, skills transfer and technology transfer. "Having worked around the world, we thought they could bring in some knowledge and technology and skills transfer with setting up the pharmaceutical company," he says. He adds that the COVID-19 pandemic has also taught them important lessons that depending on other countries for supplies will always be a challenge. "What happened recently even with Covid supplies is that South Africa which is Botswana's main supplier in terms of pharmaceutical imports, wanted to satisfy their own health care needs first, and we suffered," Dr. Tapela says. Dr. Dehdari adds that while Botswana may not have full supply from the envisaged pharmaceutical manufacturing project, the factory offers Botswana a starting point. "This will be a great initiative to diversify the economy, and to ensure self supply of pharmaceuticals," Dr. Dehdari says, adding that Botswana will be free from being hostage to supplies from South Africa or India. He believes it will also boost the health care system because of the fast-chain supply. In the last 20 years, Ensymm, which was founded by Dr. Dehdari has successfully done projects in over 44 countries worldwide and in Africa.

In Sudan in pharmaceuticals, Nigeria in agriculture and pharmaceuticals, Libya in pharmaceuticals, Namibia in food supplement study, and have been involved for three years in a pharmaceutical project with Aspen phamacare, Kenya in chemical project. This is why Dr. Dehdari believes that his company will do a good job with the Botswana project. He also answers the question, Why Germany? His view is that they do not sacrifice on quality because of budget or to meet completion deadlines.

"There is a certain quality with which we follow. WHO standard should be a minimum standard for producing such pharmaceutical products," he says, adding that the quality has to also be maintained not only for the local health care system but also for the export market.

Dr. Dehdari says Botswana is their choice because of its political and social stability. It also has an impressive economic growth rate and boasts of ample opportunities to venture into other industrial fields. He further adds that his company Ensymm is honoured to be the head consultant for developing and establishing a state-of-the-art facility, as it will get a prime reference from the country and SADC

"We hope to generate more projects for Ensymm network in Botswana and SADC after showing our capability with this reference project," he said.

Dr. Dehdari's next trip to Botswana will be as soon as the techno-financial feasibility study is done, where they will meet at site to discuss the project financing and planning with the consultancy and engineering team.



Dr. Boago Tapela and Dr. Pedram Dehdari who plan to establish a pharmaceutical manufacturing company in Botswana