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**INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING – OPPORTUNITIES FOR
INVESTMENT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES**

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INTRODUCTION

Botswana's economy has progressed over the years and experienced boom and rapid economic transformation largely due to the mining sector, which since the 1980s has contributed on average 35% to GDP, accounted for 82% of export earnings and made up 53% of Government revenue. However, as a nation we have come to realise over a decade ago that continued reliance in natural resources, in particular diamonds, was in the long term neither desirable nor sustainable. It was clearly evident that a fundamental change in Botswana's development strategy would be necessary to move beyond a narrow commodity based economy to one that was more secure and sustainable and which could pull an increasing proportion of the potential workforce, not just into the labour force but more importantly into employment in high value jobs.

This has led to a new thinking emerging in Botswana regarding the requirements necessary to build a globally competitive nation and position Botswana within the global knowledge economy. This new understanding of Botswana's path to future success was first demonstrated by the release of Vision 2016, which charts the nation's future up to the point of the 50th anniversary of the country's independence. The essential thrust of Vision 2016 is to use the platform of Botswana's natural resources endowment, firstly to consolidate its traditional strengths of a peaceful political system, sound governance and institutional regime, macroeconomic stability and financial discipline and then to create the conditions for high quality growth.

National Development Plan 9 (2003-2009) and National Development Plan 10 (2009-2016) translated the broad objectives of Vision 2016 into operational policy goals moving towards among others the development of an integrated national knowledge and innovation capability hence a greater need to develop human resource capacity.

GOVERNMENT EDUCATION EXPENDITURE

Botswana values the education of her citizens and thus has made a commitment to prioritise education and training as key to economic diversification. It is for this reason that education is seen as driver to government's national Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) and the implementation of the Tenth National Development Plan (NDP 10).

The education sector receives the largest share of total government expenditure. This has seen the government maintaining education expenditure on average at 28% of the total national budget expenditure in the last three years up to 2010. Investment in education will continue to be a priority in the current planning period (NDP 10 – 2009 to 2016) in order to achieve the aspirations of Botswana. This generous allocation of the national budget towards education and training goes to show that the Government recognises and accepts the challenge presented by the changing environment to invest more heavily in the development of human capital in all sectors (public and private), at all levels and to the very highest international standards.

EDUCATION EXPENDITURE BY OTHER AGENCIES

- Development partners
- Private sector participation in augmenting government's efforts
- Other international agencies

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER INVESTMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Botswana provides a unique investment opportunity based on its background and distinctive historical, cultural, geographical, political and economic characteristics. It has a unique investor value proposition to fully leverage and transform itself into an education investment destination of choice, and a centre of excellence in

education by attracting leading tertiary institutions, scholars, researchers and students into the country.

In line with the 2006 Botswana Excellence Strategy, the government is committed to establishing Botswana as a centre of excellence for the provision of quality education, training and research in the identified broad niche areas of Business, Mining and Energy, Medical Science and Research, Agriculture and Livestock Management, Hospitality and Tourism, Conservation and Environment, Peace and justice and Democracy, Governance and Economic Management.

Apart from these areas, Botswana is also home to a number of state of the art Technical Colleges and Health Institutes which have capacity not only for local students but can also accommodate regional and international students. However, the broad nine niche areas above have been profiled and provide opportunities for the private sector to play a significant role in developing education infrastructure and delivering quality education and training.

There is already a thriving private sector involvement in education and training at all levels. The government provides a conducive environment for private institutions to operate in Botswana. While the private provider will normally invest in the infrastructure, government assists by sponsoring most of the student at private tertiary institutions. There is still more room for other players to enter the market.

Specific projects identified for each niche area are:

1. **Business and Management:** Establish a credible business school that will appeal to a wide variety of African students in the business manager/leader development industry. Investor's options include:
 - Establishing a venture with the investor's own or an alternative brand name.
 - Establishing a business school as a Botswana brand, in association with the investor.

- Developing a Botswana business school with an exit option after a period of time.

2. Hospitality and Tourism: A project could be a Photographic Safari Tourism Training Lodge in Maun. It will among other services, provide practical and theoretical training of the highest order to students.

3. Medical Science

- An opportunity exists for training in medical and health science research. A Medical Research and Training Institute is required to provide clinical research and laboratory skills training.
- Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Harvard School of Public Health Aids initiative are already located in Botswana. These provide opportunities for strategic partnerships to establish a centre of excellence in the training of health care workers in research skills
- A world renowned research institute will satisfy regional medical research requirements for evidence-based policy formulation. SADC Member States share common health problems.
- There is a growing global interest in research in TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria. Training in this area is attractive to regional and international students.

4. Mining and Energy: Mining, in particular Diamond Mining is one of the sectors that give Botswana a comparative advantage and thus competitive in meeting the highest international benchmarks. Energy, and the growing importance of renewable energy are of strategic importance to Botswana and the SADC region, and hence the need for investment in developing new technologies for power generation to run primary schools, rural health clinics, local government facilities, rural businesses and households.

- Establish a Technical School of Mining and Energy taking into account the needs and socio economic realities of Botswana and other African countries

- The school to produce quality technicians.
- The school to contribute towards transforming the country from a resource-based economy to a private sector and innovation led economy.
- The school will reduce current expenditure on external training as well as addressing local and regional skills needs.

5. Agriculture and Livestock Management: Positioning Botswana as a centre of excellence in post-harvest technology and food quality research training through the establishment of a high quality credible training institution. (Post-Harvest Technology and Food Quality Research Institute). The institute to offer programmes in:

- Post-harvest technology for crops and animal products.
- Food quality studies research (Research into food safety and quality.
- Technology for the processing of non-food products. Training to cover processing of natural fibres (cotton, sunflower) for oil and fibre).

6. Veterinary Science: Institution offering specialist training courses for veterinary surgeons and students in the restraining of African animals, including chemical immobilisation. Rational for restraining to include wildlife disease treatment and control, wildlife trans-location, etc.

7. Conservation and Environment: There is opportunity to utilise Botswana's considerable experience and expertise in sustainable development and integrated natural resources management to establish a Centre for Advancing Sustainable Development (CASD).

8. Peace and Justice: Establish a centre for Peace and Justice to cover:

- Continuing and in-service programmes for personnel in the justice area.

- Continuing and in-service programmes for judicial officers and lawyers in the areas of human rights, transitional justice, transformative justice, dispute resolution mechanisms, securing system reform, etc.
- Management of special professional examinations, such as bar examinations, notary public examination, conveyancing examination etc.
- Conferencing services in the human rights, peace and justice areas.

9. **Democracy, Governance and Economic Management:** Creation of Democracy, Governance and Economic Management Institute.

INVESTMENT IN ICT – MAITLAMO POLICY AND THUTO NET

The National ICT Policy called Maitlamo (meaning commitment) states among other things that ‘Botswana will be a globally competitive, knowledge based and information society where lasting improvements in social, economic and cultural development are achieved through effective use of ICT’.

The key aspects of the Maitlamo Policy cover community access and development, learning, government-online, health, ICT and economic diversification, infrastructure and connectivity. Some of the main initiatives outlined in the policy that are presently implemented include the Connecting Communities Programme, which is meant to provide communities with affordable access to computers and the internet; the Thuto Net, designed to expose learners to effective education using ICT. There is the e-government programme aimed at improving public service productivity with a number of government services now offered online through a government portal.

Thuto Net, covered in the policy to promote e-learning, is a critical component of Maitlamo and its targets are to:

- Provide all schools with PCs and internet access

- Design and implement ICT curriculum content for all levels of education and training
- Design and implement the professional development of teachers
- Develop ICT skills programmes for adult and non-formal learners
- Introduce strong ICT proficiency measurement and skills monitoring programme
- Support e-education research and development
- Secure funding to sustain ICT use in education

Achieving these targets is an ambitious and expensive endeavour but significant strides have been made in this regard.