

# The Business Trust Long Run - a partnership for business

The Business Trust hits the road again as members of big business pound the pavement and in some cases, sand, alongside professional runners, corporate teams and leaders of government over 1500 kilometers across the breadth of the country to illustrate the power of partnerships.

South Africa's biggest corporate relay event, voted Finance Week's event of 2003, generated unprecedented media exposure in past years, stealing the show from the World Summit.

"This year's Long Run is particularly special because it marks the end of five years of the Business Trust and is a celebration of the fantastic results that were achieved through partnerships," says Brian Whittaker, Chief Operating Officer of the Business Trust.

In celebration of The Business Trust's five productive years, the 2004 Business Trust Long Run promises a journey as exciting, challenging and rewarding as the Trust's own journey has been.

The Business Trust Long Run commences on 12 October with 42 kilometers through the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, through Askham, to Upington, Olifantshoek, Kuruman, Vryburg, Sannieshof, Ventersdorp, through the Cradle of Humankind en route to Witbank, Waterval Boven, Nelspruit and finally into the Kruger National Park on 25 October.

The famous Business Trust tandem bicycle "Sizanani" which means, "working together", will also cover the distance to demonstrate the partnerships between government, big business and the initiatives.

Each day of the Run celebrates partnerships for South Africa and its people, visiting projects that have benefited from The Business Trust, talking with the people and running through towns and communities, sometimes off the map, all amidst much fanfare pomp and ceremony.

## Off the starters block

Five years since inception, with a vision to create jobs, develop capacity and reduce crime, stakeholders celebrate the Business Trust achieving its objectives and providing a model for collaboration between business and government along the way.

"It's a story all South Africans need to hear because the results of five years of the Business Trust clearly illustrate that together, we can do what we can't do on our own. And that this is the way to meet our country's biggest challenges," says Brian Whittaker, COO of The Business Trust.

To date, 3 million South Africans across the country have benefited from the over R900million donated by private companies and combined with government resources in programmes supported by The Business Trust. The administration cost was kept to less than 3 percent.

The President's Big Business Working Group (BBWG) was established, as an informal forum for business and Government leaders to meet under the chairmanship of President Mbeki.

With its partners the Business Trust has worked tirelessly to increase tourism and investor confidence, develop schooling and reduce crime.

The Business Trust model mobilizes funds on a basis where all companies contribute on the same formula. The largest donation was over R100m, while the smallest equaled R2500. On that basis, 145 companies committed over R900m for deployment over the five-year period. Programmes co-funded, mainly by the government eventually totaled R1, 9b for the five year.

The Trust stimulated the demand for jobs by helping to attract increasing numbers of tourists to the country through an effective international marketing programme; it improved the level of skills and service in the tourism sector by supporting a large-scale training programme; and enabled tourism enterprises to respond to the demand for jobs by supporting the development and growth of those enterprises.

50 new colleges were established, 1 million disadvantaged children helped to read better, 18 000 teachers trained, three million books provided and a 35% improvement in the Maths pass rate secured at needy schools.

The incidence of malaria was cut by 70 percent in targeted communities; 1 million new tourists were attracted to South Africa and 65 000 job opportunities were created through tourism activity. The Trusts Tourism Enterprise Programme helped to convert 15 000 of those opportunities into actual jobs through its work with small firms.

Support for work in the Justice system saw, among other things, a 40% reduction in waiting trial time for prisoners.

"The Business Trust began with the intention of bringing the challenges of development to business and the resources and logic of business to development. We hoped in this way to improve the lives of poor people, while enhancing trust and building co-operative relations between business and government. Perhaps the clearest signal of success was the Presidents proposal that the Trust should continue for another five years as part of the process of reconciliation, reconstruction, development and growth," says Whittaker.

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