

Welcome to the BDPSN Quarterly Update!

This quarter has been a whirlwind of activity for the BDPSN team! We have reached a significant milestone, completing the first quarter of our annual work plan 2024. As you know, this plan focused on fostering new partnerships and strengthening existing ones. We are happy to report significant progress on this front, which you will be able to read more about in this newsletter.

In addition to partnership development, we are excited to announce the successful launch of our e-commerce project funded by TFO Canada under the project Make Trade Work for Women in Sub-Saharan Africa! This initiative directly benefits 120 SMEs from Madagascar, Ethiopia, Lesotho, and Uganda. You will find details about the project and the impact it is making within these communities.

Finally, the BDPSN secretariat recently hosted the Board of Directors meeting, where we discussed key initiatives and progress. We are also pleased to share news regarding the ongoing recruitment for the Accounts Officer position.

We encourage you to delve into this newsletter and discover all the exciting developments at the Network this quarter.

Projects and programs

The E-commerce component of the project Make Trade work for Women in sub-Saharan Africa focuses on the utilization of e-commerce and digital marketing to increase market access and promote export trade. The project has achieved core milestones like validation of the viability of ecommerce, Need assessment for the SMEs and equipping local experts with Martials to train the SMEs.



A group photo of the CEO BDPSN and team at Pasa Production one of the project beneficiaries in Lesotho during the Needs Assessment

The participating SMEs will be trained on utilizing e-commerce websites and onboarding on marketplaces like eBay and Amazon. The in the next phase project also includes technical

aspects like revamping existing websites and developing new ones for the participating SMEs. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the project outcomes, the project is delivering one-on-one support to SMEs to handle the aspects in-house.

Partnerships and collaborations

The BDPSN Secretariat continues to grow strategic partnership as a core objective for growth of its membership. The Network is well represented in the process of the formulation of the BDS standards spearheaded by PSFU partnership with Africa Management Institute funded by MasterCard foundation. The Network is part of the Technical working group that drafted the standards and selected the initial SMEs to participate in the training of BDS providers across the nation.



Vision: A world with innovative sustainable businesses.

Mission: Provision of tailored professional business development services to the private and public sector.

Values:

1. **Credibility:** From partners, trainers and other stakeholders
2. **Quality:** Ensure quality of Business Development Services
3. **Accessibility:** To all those who need Business Development Services
4. **Centrality:** ILO packages to take central place in delivery of Business Development Services
5. **Flexibility:** Business Development Services to be responsive to all target groups



A group photo of members of the BDS providers, the team from PSFU and AMI after the BDS Thought Leaders breakfast Meeting

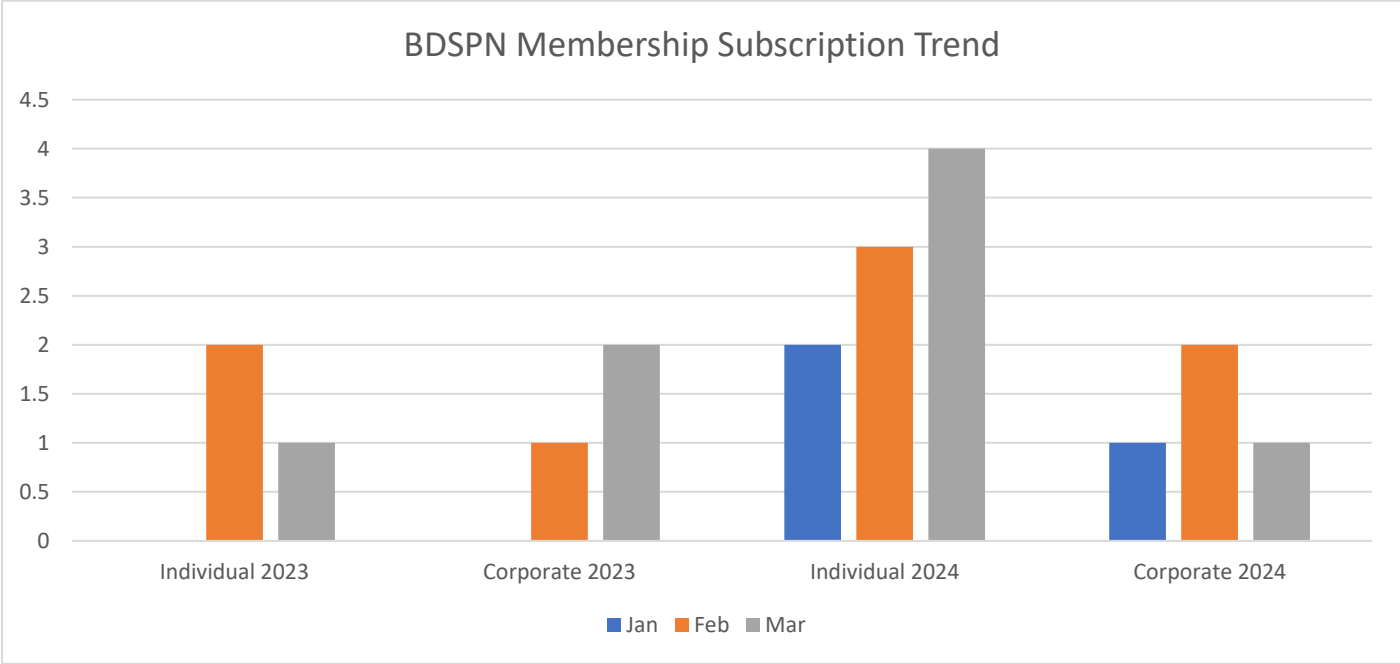
Following the drafting of the standards, the Network was represented at the BDS thought leaders breakfast meeting on 26 March 2024 at Sheraton Hotel, Kampala. The outcomes of the meeting sharpened strategies on raising awareness about the standards, formation of the BDS providers Association that brings together all players in the spectrum, Policy issues hindering uptake of BDS in the current business environment.

The Network represented by the CEO and Office Administrator at a workshop and exhibition under the theme “Convener on Entrepreneurship Support in Uganda’s Refugee Response”. The

event was hosted by The Livelihood and Resilience Sector Working Group, U-Learn, UKAID Utabiti Activity and Innovation Village. The workshop had profitable outputs for the network like increasing awareness on the network’s footprint, input on the strategy to redesign intervention in the refugee settlements in line with BDS, market access, financial support and access to digital tools for business growth.

Membership

The members subscription in the 1st quarter 2024 has gained a positive trend compared to the 1st quarter of 2023 with a 10% increase.



Material sales

The secretariat has registered sales of 632 training materials, including four SYB game kits. The sales are attributed to efforts in promoting the material on the company's social media platform and website through trainers during their support mission to business entities.

Upcoming events

1	Members Annual General Meeting	June 2024 (tentative)
2	Regional Membership meeting	August 2024
2	BDSPN 10 th Anniversary	October 2024