

## #ClosingTheGapKenya

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### **Expert Forum on SME Finance Launches Dutch Good Growth Fund in Kenya**

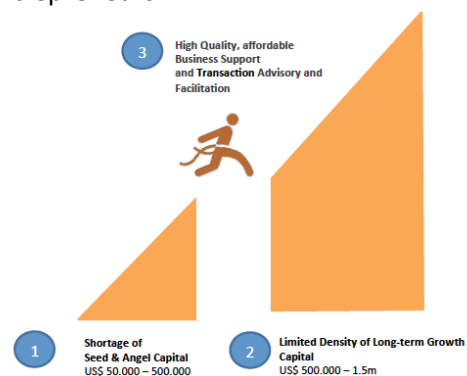
On June 8th, the Dutch Good Growth Fund (DGGF), in partnership with ANDE and EAVCA, hosted an **expert forum on SME finance** to engage and share insights on new, emerging SME finance initiatives and elaborate on potential solutions to bridge the gap between start up support and full-fledged equity participation in Kenya. The presentation of first findings from the Kenyan entrepreneurial ecosystem study, commissioned by DGGF, set the tone for the participants to gather through break out sessions and panel discussions and address key obstacles, bottlenecks and opportunities for Kenyan entrepreneurs to access adequate finance to develop their businesses.



For the first time, this expert meeting brought together members of the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) and East Africa Venture Capital Association (EAVCA), along with relevant local entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders. The venue staff had to play musical chairs in order to accommodate the crowd of 100+ participants who took every opportunity to engage and network with their peers. The participants were welcomed by H.E. Joost Reintjes,

Ambassador of the Royal Dutch Embassy in Kenya, who introduced the event as a stepping stone in DGGF's implementation towards development impact whilst bridging the finance gap for the "missing middle."

The presentation of the first insights from the Kenyan entrepreneurial ecosystem study commissioned by DGGF revealed three main gaps hindering the development and growth of Kenyan entrepreneurs:



The findings fed directly into the three breakout sessions during which attendees discussed the topics of i) Strengthening the venture capital ecosystem for fast growing enterprises ii) Integrating business support and patient risk-finance to increase the success rate of Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) and iii) Facilitating angel investment for venture growth.

Outcomes from these breakout sessions were shared during the closing panel, which helped local stakeholders identify a few potential solutions towards a more conducive ecosystem:

- facilitating access to information, including mapping out the ecosystem
- facilitating access to added value services by bridging gaps between ecosystem stakeholders for a less fragmented and more sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In addition to offering a unique platform for brainstorming, the event presented an opportunity for entrepreneurs, financiers, business enablers and policymakers to

exchange and explore new ways to collaborate in the framework of scalable and sustainable business support initiatives. Feedback from participants revealed they were grateful for the opportunity to discuss “How to Empower Entrepreneurs to Access the Ecosystem”.



*“The real game changer was to meet with investors who – in addition to providing me with the funds nobody else could – understand my business and develop it with me,”* said Obado Obadoh, Founder of Café Deli, a restaurant and bakery chain in Nairobi.

After summarizing the outcomes of this event and providing recommendations towards closing the gap, the Kenyan entrepreneurial ecosystem study will be finalized. The full report will be made available by the end of July. #ClosingTheGapKenya will be scaled beyond Nairobi and Kenya in order to identify and implement solutions to closing the finance gap for the missing middle in up to 68 countries covered by the DGGF mandate.

*The event was made possible thanks to the contribution and participation of many. We thank Steven Evers, Managing Director of Triple Jump for his introduction words; H.E. Joost Reintjes, Ambassador of Royal Dutch Embassy in Kenya for his welcome address; Jenny Everett, Deputy Director of ANDE for moderating the discussions; Stefanie Bauer, Senior Manager Intellectap for the keynote presentation; Mirco Goudriaan, Sr Policy*

*Advisor DGGF, Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Obado Obadoh, Founder, Café Deli for their reflections during the closing panel and to Niraj Varia, Investment Director at Novastar Ventures; Rishi Khubchandani, Investment Executive at GroFin Kenya and Ben White, Founder of VC4Africa for leading and moderating the breakout sessions.*

*Special thanks go out to the co-hosts of the event Mary Mwangi of ANDE East Africa Chapter Coordinator and Nonnie Wanjihia of the East Africa Venture Capital Association.*