SABMiller is an African-originated multinational brewing and beverage company headquartered in London, United Kingdom. It is the world’s second-largest brewer measured by revenues and is also a major bottler of Coca-Cola. SABMiller has recently put into place new 2020 targets for sustainable development as part of its “Prosper” initiative.
SABMiller understands that its profitability depends on healthy communities, growing economies and the responsible use of scarce natural resources.

“In our view, a business’ sustainable development strategy must be embedded in core strategy; driving positive impact through the business, its value chain and beyond. By placing sustainable development at the heart of our business and our value chains, we believe we can secure our long-term success and make a sustainable and measurable difference to the communities and ecosystems in which we operate,” said Anna Swaithes, Director of Sustainable Development.

Working in partnership means that businesses can engage in large, complex problems such as water use and quality, and can mitigate the perception that they are only working on social issues out of self-interest. “The world’s challenges are our challenges. As a local brewer, local issues are our issues. Our chosen imperatives are ‘shared’ because we can only tackle joint risks in partnership with those who also face them,” said CEO, Alan Clark.

Partnerships with the UN could be valuable, in particular in developing infrastructure, establishing policy frameworks and skills development which are large business risks for SABMiller. The company would recommend that in developing partnerships, the UN focus on agreeing clear, shared objectives and frameworks for pooling resources.

The company engages in a number of partnerships with public and private sector actors and civil society. Partnerships can be used to address social and environmental issues that fall outside of SABMiller’s business operations but which are already impacting or likely to impact on the company and for which the company assumes a degree of responsibility.

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4e Camino al Progreso Programme
Partners: The Inter-American Development Bank’s Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) and the civil society organisation, FUNDES.

In Latin America, small businesses make up more than 90 percent of all firms. SABMiller and its partners designed the 4e Programme with the goal of strengthening small local retailers.

SABMiller identifies small retailers to attend group training events hosted by FUNDES. A diagnosis period generates baseline information and action plans for retailers based on their strengths and weaknesses and need for improvement.

The programme helps address the main reasons that small-scale retailers are not living up to their potential to grow their businesses, provide better standards of living for their families or play leadership roles in their communities. The programme provides classroom training and in-store mentoring on business, life skills and leadership and on strengthening the broader “business ecosystems” in which participating retailers operate, with a special focus on facilitating access to financing and technology.

The programme has targeted close to 200,000 small retailers in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Honduras and El Salvador.

Local Enterprise Agriculture Programme
Partners: Government of Uganda

The Local Enterprise Agriculture Programme is working to support Ugandan farming communities by creating new market opportunities and capacity building.

Uganda’s Nile Breweries collaborated with Ugandan government scientists to develop a special strain of sorghum, which is a staple crop in many arid regions of the world ideal for brewing beer. The sorghum-based Eagle Lager was launched in 2002 in Uganda and rolled out in Zambia in 2005. Within five years of launch, Eagle represented half of Nile’s sales in Uganda.

The programme is a proof of concept for how to promote farming as a business in Uganda and how to bring down the cost of beer by replacing expensive imported materials with locally-sourced ingredients. The company has also worked with the Ugandan government to reduce the usual excise rate of 60% to 30% for beer brewed using home-grown ingredients that is helping to improve local livelihoods.

Farmers are provided with training to enhance their farming and entrepreneurial skills. Around half of the top ten farmer associations supplying sorghum are led by women.

Nile Breweries has provided a direct market for over 20,000 sorghum farmers and created jobs for a total of 180,000 people, including those that are indirectly involved in their supply chain.