
PEMANDU'S WORK IN AFRICA

Ms Jasmin Johnson, Executive Vice-President of Pemandu Associates, shares with us about Pemandu's work in Africa, and the potential of increased collaboration between Africa and South East Asia.



About Jasmin Johnson

Ms. Jasmin Johnson is the Executive Vice President of Pemandu Associates. A transformation specialist with over 18 years of experience at the nexus of policy, strategy, and implementation, she also has international development and government advisory experience in over 15 countries across Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Trained in public policy and economic development, she began her career with the World Bank and subsequently the United Nations secretariat in New York.

Please describe PEMANDU's work.

Pemandu Associates is a private consultancy company focused on public sector transformation, business turnaround and communications. To that end, we work closely with the highest level of government and top executives and have a presence in 29 countries and counting to help deliver national and business objectives in a sustainable and inclusive manner.



*PEMANDU Associates, led by Dato' Seri Idris Jala, former Minister and former CEO of Malaysian Airlines, 2024
(Source: Jasmin Johnson)*

Some people might think that our methodology only stops at facilitating collaboration, but I think it goes much further than that. Through our work, we allow subject matter experts and key decision-makers to appreciate the challenges and opportunities deeply rooted in the systemic status quo.



*Ms. Johnson and team in South Africa working on an ocean governance “lab” in 2014, which ultimately resulted in South Africa declaring 5% of its oceans as Marine Protected Areas.
(Source: Jasmin Johnson)*

To achieve such effective results, we believe in Doing and Being, which our President and CEO Dato Sri Idris Jala has described as a yin and yang balance. Our aim has always been hands-on involvement that helps both governments and private businesses unlock these roadblocks and navigate through intricate stakeholder management to form winning coalitions that accelerate Big, Fast Results.

I believe our work is critical as transforming nations and businesses benefits not only the clients, but also its beneficiaries in the grand scheme of things. For example, in Oman, the growth of various sectors helped its people become economically sustainable instead of creating an overreliance on any one industry.

In Rwanda, we worked with RSSB to ensure its people are socially protected, and in Malaysia we focused on building Human Capital and grooming talents at a time where there was relatively high reliance on foreign skills and talents. The point is, our goal doesn't just stop at what the client wants, but we also aim to see real impact.

Tell us more about Pemandu's work in Africa. What did you do there, and what sectors did you work with?

Africa is one of the regions we have focused on recently, and we are currently active in eight countries and counting.



We've done a lot of good work in the continent, and I'm heartened to see it turn into real results. One of the earliest countries we collaborated with in the region is Tanzania, whom we engaged in 2012 to help them pursue the goal of becoming a dynamic middle-income nation. Over three years, fourteen labs were conducted, which identified five key results areas for maximum impact, such as agriculture, water and energy.



*Ms. Johnson in Tanzania for a community safety project with the President's Delivery Bureau in 2015.
(Source: Jasmin Johnson)*



*Ms. Johnson in Oman for a labour market development "lab" with the Ministry of Manpower in Oman, 2016.
(Source: Jasmin Johnson)*

Since engaging us, the country has made substantial strides in economic growth, especially in the key sectors that we identified. I'd like to say that our work contributed to making this success possible. Since then, we've also helped countries like Botswana, Uganda and Nigeria develop a high level strategic plan for their path to economic transformation. Other than broad economic support, we also have projects that focus on specific pain points that a country might have. For example, South Africa engaged us in 2015 to analyse their healthcare sector, Ethiopia in 2017 for their youth unemployment issue, and Senegal in 2020 for agriculture, to name a few. We're excited to continue such close collaboration with African governments, and formulate effective strategies to best address their needs.

What do you think are the areas in which Southeast Asia can contribute to Africa?

I'd like to raise the example of our partnership with the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) to answer this question. The RDB approached us to help them achieve their goal of economic transformation.



*Ms. Johnson speaking on the factors that accelerate cross-continental investments at the Djibouti Forum, 2024
(Source: Jasmin Johnson)*

We identified the private sector as a key stakeholder to fuel Rwanda's growth, especially in catalytic sectors like agriculture, manufacturing and energy. Now, we're actively looking for and inviting big ideas and high impact investments into the country to accelerate Rwanda's economic trajectory, with the aim of tripling Rwanda's GDP per capita over the next decade. In that regard, Southeast Asia has excellent experience, resources and talent in these sectors, which can help to propel these priority sectors through win-win collaboration and investment. Of course, this isn't just limited to Rwanda, with many mutually beneficial projects and opportunities available across the continent. Pemandu is excellently situated to facilitate that, and I really look forward to seeing how we can deepen the friendship between these two regions.



About Pemandu

Pemandu, or the Performance Management and Delivery Unit, was set up in 2009 under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Malaysia's Department to steer the country's National Transformation Programme. In 2017, they handed the transformation mandate back to the Government of Malaysia, evolving into Pemandu Associates, a private consultancy company focused on public sector transformation, business turnaround and communications. They have conducted labs in 29 countries across 5 continents, anchored by the proven Big Fast Results (BFR) 8-step Methodology and 6 Secrets of Transformation.