

Why Tanzania asked a Kenyan firm to build BRT buses

By [James Kariuki](#)

30 May 2018

Bus body builder Labh Singh Harnam Singh (LSHS) has been hired to build high-capacity buses for Tanzania government's bus rapid transit (BRT) services as Kenya prepares to import the same from South Africa next month.



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LSHS managing director Daniel Maundu said the firm was working on the first order after the Tanzania government contracted Isuzu Motors to build the first 80-person capacity buses for use under the BRT programme.

Meanwhile, Kenya is planning to import the high capacity buses yet Tanzania, which initially imported buses from China, has turned to LSHS to use its 70-year plus experience to build the buses for the country.

Maundu who doubles as the Kenya Bus Body Builders Association chairman said Kenya's plan to import fully built units negated the Jubilee government's Big Four Agenda, especially the manufacturing pillar, where the government pledged to provide incentives to support local companies in a bid to generate jobs, revenue and, hence, higher taxes. Kenya will pay Sh500 million to import 30 buses, effectively exporting jobs to the more advanced economy.



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22 May 2018



"Our work benefits many companies that manufacture various products from batteries to springs, gaskets, lubricants, iron bars and sheets among other items.

"It is a vibrant supply chain that if activated could directly benefit 6,000 people employed across the industries," he said.

Maundu observed that most auto-assemblers and body builders were cutting staff due to reduced business as a way of easing operational costs.

"We have capacity to meet any demand within Kenya and have built adequate factories and manpower over the past decades. Kenya has three motor vehicle assemblers and 12 body builders and the plan to import fully built buses will deny us the much-needed business especially after a tough 2017," he said.

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