

David Irwin is a social entrepreneur – and a consultant in enterprise and economic development working with clients such as Asian Development Bank, DANIDA, Department for International Development, International Labour Organisation, International Trade Centre, Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts and World Bank. He works with organisations that wish to develop initiatives, in turn, to help new and growing businesses. He advises on regulatory reform and enabling environment and supports business associations to undertake projects to influence public policy. He works with social enterprises and undertakes investment appraisals. He was awarded the Queen’s Award for Enterprise Promotion in 2009.

From early 2000 till 2002, he was Chief Executive of the Small Business Service, an executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, with responsibility for managing the UK Government’s small business support programmes and a role as the “strong voice for small business at the heart of Government”. Before joining SBS, he co-founded Project North East, one of the UK’s leading enterprise and economic development agencies, and was its chief executive for 20 years.

David has an Honours Degree in Engineering Science and Management from Durham and then completed the Advanced Course in Production Methods and Management at Cambridge University. He completed his MBA in 1986 and in 2019 was awarded his PhD by Newcastle University for research on the factors leading to success of business membership organisations seeking reform of public policy in East Africa. He is a Fellow of the RSA and a Visiting Fellow at the Department of Politics, Newcastle University.

Occasionally, he finds time to play squash and take photographs, though does not devote sufficient time to either.

